

Assessment audit tool – taught modules

An audit is a good way to initiate discussion and development on an issue. It enables you to make clear the range of activities which may contribute to the issue and the process can reassure colleagues that quite a lot of work may already be developed in the area. The process can also recognise local autonomy and priorities, within an institutional frame-work, and can:

- encourage development of a strategic plan to clarify how assessment practices can be developed;
- identify how far and in what area development should take place;
- give recognition to existing activity which contributes effectively.

However an audit also serves broader purposes:

- raising awareness by staff of practice in general and of the institution's plans;
- revealing or clarifying links between the aspect being audited and plans and strategies in other areas;
- engaging a wider constituency within the academic community;
- facilitating dialogue and development within and between teaching units.

The purpose of this audit is **developmental**, not simply to come up with an overall answer for the module. It is designed to help teachers **consider** the content and design of a module with respect to the issue of **assessment** and to see where they could improve the module to better address this issue.

To prepare for the audit it is best to identify each instance when there is assessment in the module and to list for each instance the method(s) used, the student time involved and the staff time involved in marking.

It is suggested that each academic is offered the audit to determine the extent of the knowledge throughout the department. If some staff members are unaware of the existence of a particular policy or strategy, this may be time and opportunity for them to be made aware.

The questions require a variety of answers: those that ask questions about the department require a "yes/no/not sure or don't know" response, while those that ask questions about an academic's own module offer "yes/no". A few questions are multiple choice, while others require a free answer with no prompt.

Comparison of the answers to the questions among staff may provoke discussion and this is intended. For example, if some staff members consider knowledge of learning styles as irrelevant or not important to their teaching while others strongly believe in its relevance and importance a healthy discussion should follow.

The questions are by no means exhaustive. Many more could be formulated and indeed suggestions for other questions are encouraged. **[Please annotate any comments against the questions.]** There are no marks assigned to the answers – rather the questions are intended to provoke a response. Some responses are intended to promote consideration of whether the activity may be incorporated into your programme to facilitate retention. The question "why is this question being asked" should be considered. In other words, the audit is designed to help teachers consider the activities that may support progression.

The Assessment Audit Tool has been adapted from the Centre for Bioscience audit which is available to download from the website at:

<http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/audit.aspx>

1. Are the assessment methods appropriate to the learning outcomes?

1.1. Are the learning outcomes explicit for the module and for each constituent element piece of work where appropriate?	Yes / no/ don't know
1.2. Are assessments mapped to the learning outcomes they provide evidence for?	Yes / no/ don't know
1.3. Are the different skills and attributes of the learning outcomes reflected in the assessment? (e.g. <i>knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes etc</i>)	Yes / no/ don't know
1.4. In setting the learning outcomes is consideration given to the learning outcomes in other concurrent or previous modules?	Yes / no/ don't know
1.5. Does a student have more than one opportunity to demonstrate a learning outcome?	Yes / no/ don't know
1.6. Are the assessment methods appropriate to the teaching style used?	Yes / no/ don't know
1.7. Is Computer Aided Assessment used at all on the programme?	Yes / no/ don't know
1.8. Do you use self or peer assessment? [tick as appropriate]	Self/peer /neither
1.9. Is the different achievement of each learning outcome separately identifiable by the student in the overall assessment?	Yes / no/ don't know
1.10. Do students experience the method of assessment before it is used summatively? <i>[Either in this module or in a previous module]</i>	Yes / no/ don't know
1.11. Are different assessment techniques used to give the student a variety of ways in which to demonstrate their abilities?	Yes / no/ don't know

2. The assessment methods used - are they known to provide a “secure” assessment appropriate to the teaching style?

2.1. To what extent are the methods subjective?	Very much / not at all / don't know
2.2. Are assessments made from written and agreed marking schemes?	Yes / no/ don't know

3. Are there published marking criteria and grade descriptors available to the student?

3.1. Are these known to and followed by the staff doing the marking?	Yes / no/ don't know
3.2. Are exemplar answers available?	Yes / no/ don't know
3.3. Are exemplar answers available at different grades?	Yes / no/ don't know
3.4. Are the grade descriptors congruent with those on other modules taken by the students?	Yes / no/ don't know
3.5. Are threshold levels of attainment established for all assessments?	Yes / no/ don't know
3.6. If multiple markers are used for a given piece of work is uniformity of marking tested and, if necessary, compensated for?	Yes / no/ don't know / not used
3.7. If double marked, is there a mechanism OTHER than taking the average to resolve significant differences?	Yes / no/ don't know
3.8. Is marking done anonymously?	Yes / no/ don't know
3.9. Are the students clear as to what would be deemed to constitute plagiarism?	Yes / no/ don't know
3.10. Has assessment been designed to discourage/prevent plagiarism?	Yes / no/ don't know
3.11. Is there external input into the assessment process?	Yes / no/ don't know

4. Is assessment timely and progressive throughout the module?

4.1. Does assessment provide a monitor of student performance throughout the module?	Yes / no/ don't know
4.2. Are assignments progressively weighted throughout a module?	Yes / no/ don't know
4.3. Is there time to allow students to respond to a poor assessment before the end of the module?	Yes / no/ don't know

4. Is assessment timely and progressive throughout the module? (contd.)

4.4. Is assessment timely with regard to:	
4.4.1. the speed with which the results are available to the students?	Yes / no/ don't know
4.4.2. in relation to other assessed work on the module? <i>[So students know the results and have had feedback before the next piece of assessed work]</i>	Yes / no/ don't know
4.4.3. in relation to other assessment on other modules? <i>[So the totality of the assessment as experienced by the students is reasonably distributed and does not all take place in an unreasonably short period]</i>	Yes / no/ don't know

5. Feedback

5.1. Does the University have a feedback policy?	Yes / no/ don't know
5.2. What are its key features? 1. 2. 3.	
5.3. Are formative assessment opportunities available for most modules?	Yes / no/ don't know
5.4. Is feedback provided on all module assessments?	Yes / no/ don't know
5.5. Is feedback provided at the end of module assessment?	Yes / no/ don't know
5.6. Is feedback provided to all students?	Yes / no/ don't know
5.7. Is feedback sufficiently detailed to enable the student to identify particular weaknesses?	Yes / no/ don't know
5.8. Does feedback outline omissions as well as errors?	Yes / no/ don't know
5.9. Are you aware whether students read/access/peruse the feedback provided?	Yes / no/ don't know
5.10. Are poorly-performing students counselled?	Yes / no/ don't know
5.11. Does counselling take into account performance on other modules?	Yes / no/ don't know
5.12. Does the assessment provide you with feedback on how students are progressing?	Yes / no/ not enough

6. Resit/second-chance arrangements

6.1. Are students made aware of resit opportunities?	Yes / no/ don't know
6.2. Are these published at least three months before taking place?	Yes / no/ don't know
6.3. Are the same learning outcomes assessed in the re-sit?	Yes / no/ don't know
6.4. Are resit candidates given effective feedback on their performance in the first sit?	Yes / no/ don't know

7. What are the students' views on the quality and usefulness of the assessment?

7.1. Are the students' views on the assessment processes known and elicited each year?	Yes / no/ don't know
7.2. Is this data obtained from all the students other than those absent because of illness?	Yes / no/ don't know
7.3. Are the results broken down, or are all student views treated as a homogeneous group?	Individual/ grouped/ don't know
7.4. Are students invited to contribute to the development of new approaches to assessment?	Yes / no/ don't know

Assessment of modules

Proportion of total teaching time allocated to assessment. It is appreciated that individual students will spend different amounts of time involved with teaching/learning/assessment activities. Use estimated average values.

	Hours
<p>a). Total hours spent by teachers (including demonstrators, PG tutors etc) on assessment in this module. <i>This includes time spent setting assessments, marking student work, compiling and processing assessment data, marking lab/project work (include that proportion of time spent in labs which is actually involved in assessing the performance of the student at the bench if this is done).</i></p>	
<p>b). Total hours of teaching time spent by staff in direct contact with students. <i>This is usually timetabled time for teachers (of all levels) to be in contact with students. If students are taught for one hour in, say, five small groups, then five hours of teacher time would be involved. Do NOT include preparation time or time spent on assessment of students.</i></p>	
<p>c). Total hours spent by a student in being assessed. <i>Include examination and viva time, time spent actually <u>writing</u> assessed course work (e.g. essays, practical write-ups etc) but NOT the time spent <u>preparing</u> the material. Estimate where necessary. Assume coursework takes 0.5hr to write 1 page.</i></p>	
<p>d). Total hours for which a student is involved in any form of teaching/learning/assessment activity (lectures + practicals + self-directed + directed + tutorials+others etc) on this module. <i>This is the total hours you would expect this module and the work associated with it to occupy the student. Estimate where necessary.</i></p>	
<p>e). How proportional is the staff time spent in assessment to the marks awarded? How proportional is the student time spent in completing the work for an assessment to the marks awarded? <i>[For each assessed item consider the proportionality between the fraction of the total marks awarded and the assessment time devoted to it. Consider this for both the staff and the students. This item is not represented numerically but you should note areas where the time spent by staff in completing the assessment is very large compared with the proportion of marks given for the work]</i></p>	

Reflecting on the results

What are you and your colleagues doing well?

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What have you identified as things you don't do?

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What would you like to find out more about?

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What issues would you like to address?

- Do resource or other constraints make any of your options unrealistic?
- At what point in the module could appropriate changes be made?
- Which four changes would have the most impact on the module?
- Are there potential 'quick wins'? Is there something simple that you or your colleagues could implement within this or before the next term/semester?

Action plan

List the issues you would like to address, the changes to be made and the resources or help you may need.



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