MEMBERS OF THE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION STANDING COMMITTEE
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) (Winthrop Professor Jane Long) – Chair
Associate Chair of Academic Board (Professor Brett Kirk)
Director of Centre for Advancement of Teaching and Learning (Winthrop Professor Denise Chalmers)
Director of Institutional Research Unit (Dr Greg Marie)
President of the Guild (Ms Emma Greeney)
Director of Student Services (Mr Jon Stubbs)
Faculty representatives from the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee:
  Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics (Dr Angus Tavner) – Deputy Chair
  Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (Dr Brenton Knott)
  Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (Associate Professor Sandra Carr)
Assistant Professor Eileen Thompson (CATLyst, UWA Business School)
Professor Sid Nair (Higher Education Development (Evaluations), CATL)

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING –
MONDAY 1ST MARCH 2010

This is to confirm that the next meeting of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee will be held from 10.00am to 11.30am on Monday 1st March 2010 in meeting room W1, Winthrop Tower.

Part 1 of the agenda is to be dealt with en bloc by motion of the Chair. There are no items in Part 2. Part 3 is for discussion. A member may request the transfer of an item from Part 1 to Part 3.

Jan Cardy
Executive Officer
AGENDA

WELCOME
The Chair will welcome members to the first meeting in 2010 of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee and in particular new members Associate Professor Sandra Carr and Professor Sid Nair.

APOLOGIES
The Chair will record any apologies. Members are reminded that apologies should be forwarded to the Executive Officer prior to the meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT OR PERCEIVED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
The Chair will invite members to declare potential for conflict or perceived conflicts of interest, if applicable, with regard to items on the agenda.

1. MINUTES – REF: F29275
Confirmation of the minutes of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee meeting held on Tuesday 8th December 2009.

2. ITEMS/BUSINESS IN PROGRESS FOR NOTING – REF: F7739, F25751
Members are asked to note the following items as ‘business in progress’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM/BUSINESS IN PROGRESS</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Practices within respective faculties</td>
<td>Feedback is being sought from Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) on the extent to which the advice, provided in the paper entities “Response to assessment Committee on Examinations” had impacted on assessment practices within respective faculties – no feedback was received from faculties. Chair to follow up with Associate Deans</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>In progress.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Consideration</td>
<td>Review Special Considerations policy and procedures in the context of faculty feedback and develop a matrix to determine appropriate adjustment of marks in relation to special consideration</td>
<td>Second Stage Working Party convened by Academic Secretary, Ms Sylvia Lang</td>
<td>In Progress. Amended Special Consideration, procedures and proposed matrix will be considered in early 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Evaluation of Teaching at UWA</td>
<td>Report referred to the University’s Executive</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>In progress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION STANDING COMMITTEE – CONSTITUTION – REF: F29274**

The Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee was established in September 2009 under the auspices of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

The role of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee is to consider, advise and make recommendations to the Teaching and Learning Committee and/or other University bodies or officers, as appropriate.

3.1 **Modus Operandi of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee**

In accordance with University practice, the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee is guided by the following University policies and practices:

- Principles for the Operation of Committees
- Rules for the Operation of Committees
- University Committee Members' Code of Conduct
- The Effective Committee Member


3.2 **Constitution**

A copy of the Committee’s constitution is attached (Attachment A). Members will note there are minor ‘track changes’ which will be referred to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

For noting

4. **CIRCULATION OF ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION STANDING COMMITTEE AGENDAS AND MINUTES – REF: F29275**

Over recent years distribution of committee agendas and minutes throughout the University has increasingly become electronic – benefits include earlier receipt of the agenda and easier access to web links contained within the agenda papers.

At its meeting on 12th November 2009, the Teaching and Learning Committee resolved (R51/09) ‘that Teaching and Learning Committee agendas be distributed electronically, as a trial, for 2010’ and this approach will flow through to its standing committees.


Members will be advised by email when agendas and minutes are available.

For noting

5. **APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS – REF:F28685**

The Teaching and Learning Committee's Teaching and Learning Development Fund supports priorities in teaching and learning focussing on strategies outlined in the Education Section of the University's Operational Priorities Plan. In support of the operational objective (EDU 3) "to extend high-quality teaching approaches and improve learning outcomes", enhanced feedback to students has been targeted for further action.
In 2010, the Chair foreshadows the formulation of a scheme under the auspices of the Fund to provide a small grant to each Faculty and the School of Indigenous Studies to focus on improving the provision of feedback to students on assessment.

For information

6. REVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY’S ASSESSMENT POLICIES – REF: F29501

At its meeting held on 8th December 2009, members considered a paper entitled ‘Assessment Policy at UWA’. The minute of the discussion is available on the web at http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/staffnet/committees/assessment/_nocache.

To assist with the progress of this item, and the development of an appropriate policy, the Chair will convene an informal working party and the following members have agreed to participate:

- W/Professor Jane Long (Convener)
- W/Professor Denise Chalmers
- Professor Brett Kirk
- Dr Angus Tavner

For information

PART 2 – ITEMS FOR DECISION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

No items

PART 3 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

7. FORMULATION OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (DAF) – REF: F29500

At its meeting held in April 2009, the Assessment Standing Committee which preceded the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee had agreed that a Developmental Assessment Framework (DAF) should be formulated with a view to:

- providing an array of assessment modes that may be considered in developing good assessment practices
- presenting it as a basis for identifying the essentials that should be considered in the curriculum development for units
- providing useful guidance for assessing new courses that would be considered by the Board of Coursework Studies as part of the Future Framework reforms.

The formulation of DAF is being undertaken by the Centre for Advancement for Teaching and Learning and attached (Attachment B) for members’ consideration is a paper that introduces various different forms of assessment which are commonly available and when they are best used.

For members’ information, this item has been carried over from December’s meeting when it was agreed that discussion of the item would be inappropriate as a number of members were absent, but especially the author, W/Professor Denise Chalmers, who was not present to introduce the item and outline any further progress or contribute to discussion.

For discussion
8. MODERATION PRACTICES – REF: F8744

Anonymity in formal examinations has been a long standing issue that has been considered by the University over the last two decades. Although the concept is not new, given that the Law School has anonymous examination protocols in place and it is a common practice in some Australian universities, the issue was revisited during 2007, when the (then) Assessment Standing Committee commissioned a small working party to reconsider the issue and undertook a trial of anonymous assessment in examinations.

Subsequent to this extensive review, the Academic Council resolved (R33/09) as follows:

"(i) that the proposed anonymous assessment process be not mandated University-wide;
(ii) to endorse the proposal that the Assessment Standing Committee be requested to undertake appropriate steps to address students’ perceptions about bias in formal exam marking, fears of such bias and their overall confidence level in the University’s formal assessment processes;
(iii) to encourage faculties and schools to adopt a form of anonymous assessment in examinations where deemed possible and appropriate."

In October 2009, the Chair wrote to Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) to seek their advice about moderation practices and any other activities that may help to address part (ii) of the resolution. Tackling fears about bias by informing students of the extent of existing moderation was a measure strongly supported by the Guild as one means to ensure confidence in the University’s approaches to assessment.

In particular the Chair requested any information from faculties, concerning:

“moderation in examination marking (extent, type and frequency) and moderation procedures used in other forms of assessment”

Four faculties have provided feedback which is attached (Attachment C)

For discussion

9. PUBLICATION OF EXAMINATIONS TIMETABLES – REF: F7739

At the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee meeting held on 8th December 2009, a suggestion was raised ‘that the publication of the examination timetable be brought forward to the beginning of semester, or as early as possible in the semester.’

Members discussed the benefits this would provide to all students, but in particular overseas students who could organise earlier, and hence cheaper, flights home. It would also benefit all students who might be considering undertaking travel and/or research during semester breaks. It was noted that the provision of unit outlines, which included assessment mechanism statements, had been brought forward to at least one working day prior to the beginning of semester and any consequent flexibility regarding provision of the examination timetable was raised. Examinations came within the purview of Student Services and it was agreed to refer this suggestion to the Director of Student Services for consideration and advice to facilitate further discussion at the Committee’s next meeting.

The Director of Student Services has considered the suggestion and his response is attached (Attachment D) for members’ information.

For discussion
10. ASSESSMENT FUTURES – REF: F12207

Professor David Boud, University Of Technology, Sydney, and Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Senior Fellow, throughout 2009 consulted widely within the sector to produce the document 'Assessment 2020: Seven propositions for assessment reform in higher education'.

In view of the centrality of the document's themes to the current and future work of the Standing Committee in the context of UWA's New Courses, and the participation in the consultation by W/Professor Denise Chalmers, members are invited to read the attached (Attachment E) document with a view to further discussion. W/Professor Chalmers will introduce the item. The full website associated with Professor Boud's project can be found at http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/assessment-futures/

For discussion

11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee will be held on 8th April 2010 from 10am to 11.30am in the Office of Development meeting room (Level 1).
Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee
Constitution

(Endorsed by the Teaching and Learning Committee – R47/09)

This committee operates in accordance with the Principles and Rules for the Operation of Committees available at http://www.secretariat.uwa.edu.au/page/89528

Members must act in accordance with the University Committee Members’ Code of Conduct available at http://www.secretariat.uwa.edu.au/page/89528

Position of the Committee within the University of Western Australia
1. The Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee is a standing committee of the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee.

Role
2. The role of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee is to consider, advise and make recommendations to the Teaching and Learning Committee and/or other University bodies or officers, as appropriate, including:
   (a) review assessment-related practices and policies and their implementation at UWA to ensure transparency and good practice;
   (b) consider changes to assessment practices and policies at UWA as appropriate, with a view to supporting high quality student learning;
   (c) promote and disseminate examples of good practice in assessment that support other relevant University priorities including:
       • promoting good teaching approaches;
       • diversifying the experience of UWA students;
       • improving participation in UWA courses; and
       • extending the links between teaching, learning and research;
   (d) review and advise on evaluation of teaching and student learning, with a view to ensuring its effectiveness, timeliness and relevance to the University;
   (e) monitor progress of implementation strategies included in the Education Section of the University’s Operational Priorities Plan as they relate to assessment and evaluation of teaching and student learning;
   (f) undertake research and review of issues associated with assessment and evaluation as requested by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning).

Membership
3. (1) The committee comprises:
   Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) as Chair;
   Chair of the Board or nominee
   Director, Student Services
   Director, Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning
   Director, Institutional Research Unit
   President of the Guild
   Three faculty representatives from the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee
   Up to two co-opted members, if required for balance or specific expertise

   Deleted: Teaching and Learning

(2) The Chair may appoint a Deputy Chair;

(3) Co-opted members and faculty representatives are appointed for two years and may be re-appointed.
Standing Invitees
4. Standing Invitees are at the discretion of the Chair.

Skills and/or Qualifications of Members and Standing Invitees
5. It is desirable that members have a leadership role within the teaching and learning/education portfolio in their respective functional area, or expertise related to assessment and evaluation, and these areas of expertise are to be taken into account when nominees are appointed.

Quorum
6. The quorum for the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee is half the current membership plus one.

Decisions
7. (1) Each member has a vote.
   (2) The Chair has an ordinary vote and a casting vote.

Frequency of Meetings
8. The Committee normally meets up to six times per annum.

17 September 2009
Forms of Assessment

These pages introduce various different forms of assessment which are commonly available and when they are best used.

All of them are discussed under the following headings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>brief description of the method</th>
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<tr>
<td>Indications</td>
<td>when to use it</td>
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<td>Cautions</td>
<td>when not to use it</td>
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<td>Special considerations</td>
<td>things to be aware of</td>
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<td>Notes</td>
<td>anything else which has not been mentioned under another heading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Other sources, information, references</td>
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</table>

The assessment methods:
1. Case Studies
2. Direct observation
3. Unseen examinations
4. Seen or open book exams
5. Multiple choice tests
6. Performance projects
7. Practical projects
8. Problem sheets
9. Self assessment
10. Simulations
11. Collaborative assessment
12. etc

Sources utilised:


Etc
Assessment table: Best fit for type of learning and skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of assessment</th>
<th>1 Disciplinary knowledge and skills</th>
<th>2 Research based skills</th>
<th>3 Acquire the skills required to learn</th>
<th>4 Develop personal, social, cultural and ethical awareness</th>
<th>5 Communicate clearly, effectively and appropriately</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Case Studies</td>
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1 Case-Studies

Description

Case studies range from simple vignettes illustrating issues in the practice of a discipline, through to complex sets of documentation which may require analysis and research. Questions may be short answer: "Was Anne within her rights to insist on a refund? What legislation governs this situation?" to complex plans for a marketing strategy, or proposals for a design solution.

Indications

- Excellent for assessment of application of principles to real-world situations. Can reach all the way up Bloom's original taxonomy to "synthesis" and "evaluation".
- Provides useful information for formative purposes, including diagnosis of problems, because answering the questions or meeting the requirements is often a multi-stage process.

Cautions

- Do not use where criteria for assessment of correct or successful answers are contestable or unclear (although it is acceptable for there to be several "correct" answers).
- Requires a degree of sophistication on the part of students when used at any level beyond the "single-issue" case.

Special considerations

- The level of detail has to be addressed carefully. If too sparse, it may well suggest its own answers: if too complex, students can get lost. Distracting information is legitimate, but should be introduced with care. Do not carried away with the story!
- Case-studies are usually presented in textual form, although videos and spreadsheets have their place in appropriate disciplines. Note that the translation of material into text presents its own problems.

Notes

- Both the design and the marking of case-study based work is time-consuming, and they really need to be piloted and revised in the light of feedback, which makes them problematic for use for examinations.
- Can be used in conjunction with several other methods: they may shade into simulations, can form the basis of project briefs, and lend themselves to collaborative working.
- See also Problem-Based Learning

Resources
2 Direct Observation

Description

For practical subjects, this is the most obvious form of assessment: watch someone doing something to see if they can do it properly.

Indications

- For assessment of practical skills, which can be demonstrated by performance.

Cautions

- For any area in which performance itself is not enough, direct observation needs to be supplemented by other methods. One recommendation is oral questioning, to get at the rationale of performance.

Special considerations

- Sampling: one observation is not enough, but there is a trade-off, because observation is an extremely expensive way of assessing.
- Need for clear assessment criteria: reliability is only assured when everyone engaged in the assessment process is perfectly clear about what is being looked for, and what evidence is required to determine competence. Developing observation protocols is not a trivial activity.
- Control for context: one of the difficulties of assessing teaching by direct observation, for example, is that some classes and topics are far more difficult to teach than others.
- Ensure that product evidence is gathered and retained wherever possible, including video-recordings etc. When evidence consists of check-lists or similar devices, ensure that the student has a copy as soon as possible, and that there is an opportunity for dissenting views of a particular occasion of observation to be recorded. Direct practice is ephemeral, and judgements may later be contested.

Notes

See work practice

Resources
3 Unseen Examinations

Description

This is the traditional form of summative assessment. Students are confronted with a number of questions, in essay, problem, short-answer or multiple-choice format, about which they have either minimal or no prior information, and have to produce answers in a set period, with recourse to no other resources than those in their heads, or specific equipment provided by the examiner.

Indications

- Unseen examinations are seen as one of the most secure forms of assessment because they take place in a highly controlled and invigilated environment.
- Proponents of examinations point out that they are one of the few ways of ensuring that students revise the entire syllabus, and commit it to memory. Unfortunately, such memory is—if not short-term—closely tied to the stimulus of the examination event.

Cautions

- As suggested above, students may simply "cram" the facts and regurgitate them (relevant or not).
- Examinations typically generate high degrees of anxiety, amounting to cognitive paralysis on the part of some candidates. They call for very specific skills, which may well be irrelevant to the subject being examined, and are therefore often low on validity, but high on discrimination potential.

Special considerations

- In the humanities and social sciences, in particular, exams are deceptively easy to set. In maths, pure and applied sciences, individual questions may be difficult and time-consuming to devise, but this is largely a matter of ensuring their individual consistency and that the issues addressed do not exceed the content and level of the module.
- Little attention is usually paid to the overall impact of the exam represented in the spread of questions and the opportunities afforded to the student to display their capabilities. The underlying assumption of setting exams often seems to be, "Let's see how we can catch them out", rather than "What will give them the opportunity to display their knowledge?"

Notes

Resources
4 Seen or Open-book Examinations

Description

The **seen** (as opposed of course to "unseen") examination allows students to read case-study material or prescribed texts for a defined period (probably about a week) before the date of the examination. They can discuss it and research background material, but they do not know the actual questions to be asked until they enter the examination room.

The **open-book** examination allows students to consult required texts (legal statutes, for example, or various tables) during the examination. The texts have to be clean, *i.e.* without any form of annotation.

Indications

- If examinations are required, both of these are useful devices for getting around the memorisation requirement, thereby freeing the student to concentrate on higher-level issues in revision. They retain, however, most of the security advantages of the standard examination.
- The seen paper makes it possible to present substantial amounts of information in advance, and to test the students' skills in working with it.

Cautions

- Seen examinations are only slightly less anxiety-inducing than conventional ones.
- There is always the possibility of some students managing to derive an unfair advantage during the preparatory period: on the other hand, is that so different from the case of any student who revises efficiently and uses whatever resources are available?

Special consideration

- The preparatory material needs to be prepared with great care.
- Even more than unseen examinations, students will concentrate their revision on what they expect to find in the paper, potentially to the neglect of the rest of the module content.

Resources
5 Multiple-Choice Tests

Description

- Multiple-choice questions (MCQs) are sometimes referred to as “objective” tests, although the only thing which is more objective about them than other forms of assessment is the standardisation of the marking scheme.
- They consist of a "stem", which usually takes the form of a question. The student then has to choose from a number of "items", which are alternative answers. In most forms, one of these is the correct answer (although there are variants which allow for a number of correct answers), and the others are "distractors".

Indications

- Useful for easy administration to large numbers of students, especially where marking is to be done by assistants rather than the test-setter. Computer marking and web-administered tests are well-established.
- Effective for testing sheer knowledge and memory, and for problem-solving in convergent subject areas.

Cautions

- Any area in which there may be legitimate dispute about the "correct" answer.

Special considerations

- Good MCQs are much harder to design than you think.
- Knowledge that a topic is to be assessed by MCQs may well encourage students to revise by memorising discrete items of information, rather than developing an overall understanding of the topic.

Notes

- The probability of choosing the correct answer on a random basis is not particularly high, if there are sufficient distractors ("True or false" questions are rarely a good idea), and a sufficient number of questions.
- The "trick" is to ensure that the distractors are plausible. If they are chosen on the basis of representing common errors in understanding the topic, patterns of wrong choices can have useful diagnostic value.

Resources
6 Performance Projects

Description

In the performing arts, in particular, the performance project—staging a play, a concert, a dance performance—is a well-established form not only of summative assessment, but of structuring an entire sequence of teaching. However, other forms of practical project which involve planning, implementation and evaluation share important features with the traditional performance project. Hence a marketing campaign, an enterprise project, a charity fund-raising exercise, an exhibition, an expedition, a sports competition and so on fall into broadly the same category.

Indications

- Any relatively complex area of learning which requires planning and preparation to be translated into a practical expression, generally involving a group working together.

Cautions

- Largely dictated by risk factors—take them very seriously—and cost.
- Performance projects are big events, and can easily absorb much more time than expected on the part of students and staff. They may jeopardise other concurrent work. Always consult colleagues teaching other modules to the same students in that semester, and integrate several modules under the overall project, if you can.

Special considerations

- Assessment criteria, as always, need to be clear. Assessment takes place all through the project, to give credit for thoroughness of planning, team management, financial control, etc., as well as the final event. It makes sense for assessment of a number of areas of study to be undertaken within the same framework.
- As ever, that calls for a clear marking scheme, and given the "sudden death" nature of the final product, probably a number of markers to provide checks and balances
- Allowance needs to be made for unforeseen factors, so that the assessment of all members of a group is not jeopardised by, for example, illness or injury to a lead performer, or bad weather.
- And it is not over even when the fat lady sings. There will be post-event activities such as winding up the financial arrangements and making good changes to rooms. They can also yield assessable material (and continuing the assessment into the follow-up may help ensure it is tackled seriously).
- Ensure that product evidence is gathered and retained wherever possible, including video-recordings etc.

Notes

See the general remarks about group-based assessments

Resources
7 Practical Projects

Description

- A practical project is usually set for summative assessment in a vocational or professional area, where students work, individually or in a group, on a task set by the teacher or by negotiation (preferable) which brings together the knowledge and skill requirements of the module or course.
- The origin of the term "masterpiece" is in a practical project which marked the graduation of a former apprentice in a traditional trade.

Indications

- Particularly appropriate in vocational and professional education, where the integration of discretely-taught skills and knowledge is required.

Cautions

- Do not use when you are not convinced the students can cope; when there are unacceptable levels of risk, to students or clients if any; and where there is any substantial disagreement about objectives and criteria between members of the assessment team.

Special considerations

- Projects often take a long time to complete, sometimes longer than modern modular course structures allow. They can also require funds! It is important to ensure that the task is manageable within the time and other resources available, before allowing students to embark on it.
- Students rarely undertake projects with no tutor guidance at all, if only for health and safety reasons. It is important to be both clear and fair about the limits of the tutorial guidance available. You should also be explicit about the kind of evidence required for the assessment. Is it simply a report? Or is product evidence required too? Is a log required?
- See the notes on group-based assessments.
- The management of projects calls for many skills: time-management, organisation, communication, etc. While these are "Key Skills", which it is important for students to acquire, they may be strictly irrelevant to the task of the course. It is important to distinguish these in the assessment criteria, to avoid issues of discrimination.

Notes

- Remember that when students undertake projects which bring them into contact with the public, they do so in the name of your institution. This may be good PR, or it may be bad, but the institution may have rules about how its name can be used outside.
- There may also be ethical considerations about reference to particular clients or consumers in reports, or in video or audio evidence. Clearance can be complicated: consult your departmental ethics committee at a very early stage.

Resources
8 Problem Sheets

Description

Problem-, work- or example-sheets are traditional formative assessment devices in maths and science disciplines, but are also found in professional disciplines such as law and accountancy. Students are issued with a list of examples to be worked through in time for the next taught session, when they are discussed in class. They may well be self- or peer-assessed, and the teacher may or may not see them.

Indications

- Most courses in which there is a substantial element of intellectual skill involved, where this can be exercised without recourse to complex equipment which students may not be able to access.
- Usually, but not exclusively, in convergent subject areas (for purely practical reasons of dealing with many alternative and equally valid answers).

Cautions

- None, as long as the precautions are followed, and the students do have the tools to handle the exercise.

Special considerations

- The preparation of problem sheets is very time-consuming. They have to be devised so as to focus only on the material covered to date, and yet to make use of that material comprehensively.
- Take careful note of feedback about how long such problems take the average student: it is easy for the confident teacher to under-estimate how long they will take the struggling student.

Notes

- It is fairly common practice to make the examples more difficult as the student works through the paper. This ensures that:
  - There is something for everyone
  - You can get a rough idea of class level by finding out how far each student got
  - You can develop the sheet as a teaching device, by building later examples on earlier ones
- It is wise to develop a policy on collaborative working: it is likely to happen anyway, and students can learn a great deal from it—but if you place too much store on the results of these problem sheets, you may simply end up encouraging plagiarism (and even harassment and exploitation of some students). The old saw about, "the only person you cheat is yourself" may well be true, but does not often carry much weight. It is important to devise an approach which stops short of encouraging this.
- Central to such an approach is the way in which the processing of the answers is carried out in the class. Use it as an opportunity genuinely to find out where students are experiencing difficulty, rather than leaving any students who confess to problems feeling that they are inadequate and stupid.
DRAFT Version 1, Nov 2009

- Make efforts to anticipate common problems: "Anyone end up with a minus answer?"..."OK, it's a common difficulty. Look back to...“ By showing that you recognise the difficulties students may experience, you respect them and encourage them.

Resources
9 Self-assessment

Description

This is self-explanatory: it is about getting students to develop the skills and judgment to assess themselves. Clearly it applies mainly to formative assessment, but it is none the less important for that. Students who are capable of assessing themselves are already half-way to being reflective practitioners (only half-way because the assessments may not be fully valid). It is part of their development that they should no longer be entirely reliant on their teachers to assess them.

Indications

More often than you think. Teachers tend to believe that given the chance of self-assessment, students will always mark themselves more highly than their teachers would. If the self-assessment is a short-cut to passing a module or not (summative), this might be the case, but their judgments—even in the case of “immature” adolescents—often prove to be remarkably accurate or even conservative.

Cautions

• First assessments in any given module, when the students do not really have a clue about the criteria and how they work in practice. Having said that, why not spend some time making them transparent to the students? There is the possibility of fostering surface learning, of course, if it is just a matter of helping them to play the assessment game, but if you can demonstrate that the assessments are valid, this is likely to be less of a problem.

• When there is some other agenda which might distort the assessment: group rivalries, for example, when the assessment is made public.

Special considerations

• Clearly, this approach is complementary to teacher assessment. It is not reasonable to abrogate all responsibility for assessment—and some students even resent being asked to take any part in assessment at all. They see it as the teacher's job: if they can't be persuaded otherwise, this is symptomatic of a problematic approach to the whole learning enterprise.

Notes

Don't expect students to assess themselves on a blank sheet: they need a format in which to do it. The framework below shows one approach. It is far from perfect, and it was devised specifically for an outcomes-based programme, and used in conjunction with a learning contract (hence the reference to an earlier question), but the first part helps students to realise that they are doing this assessment as an aid to their learning, rather than simply to jump through artificial hoops set for them by the teachers, and the second part helps them to focus on the assessment criteria—and if they can find their own faults as they are drafting their submission and correct them, so much the better.

Resources
Complete this when you have finished the work: but consult the questions as you go along as an aid to revising and polishing your submission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Things which only you (the student) can assess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>On reflection, what do I now know or understand that I didn’t before I started this piece of work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Has this work met my original learning needs? (Check with answer to Q.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Does it have any implications for the further development of my practice?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Things parallel to those which tutors will be assessing:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Have I adequately covered the content?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Does it meet the criteria for the level at which I am submitting it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Does the work present a coherent argument?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Have I addressed all the outcomes? And is it easy for the marker to locate them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>What are the principal strengths of this piece of work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>What are its principal weaknesses and the things I need to concentrate on further?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Does the work do justice to my capabilities? If not, why not?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signed

Date
10 Simulations

Description

Simulations vary from the realistic flight simulator, through the pared-down role-play, to the stylised reconstruction of a business situation on a spreadsheet. It is not so much the external circumstances which are simulated, as the decision-making, skill and practice of the practitioner working with them. Simulations are special cases of games.

Indications

- Wherever there is a need to move closer to the reality of practice: where the text-based case-study does not convey the urgency of decision-making, for example.
- Wherever there is a need to move away from the reality of practice: on competence-based programmes, for example, there may be little opportunity (one hopes) for direct real-life observation of dealing with an aggressive client or patient, health or safety emergency, or particular kind of equipment fault.

Cautions

None, as long the demands of the situation are commensurate with the skill of the learner.

Special considerations

- Given that what you may want to simulate may be something which is dangerous in real life, it should go without saying that it will require special attention to health and safety precautions.
- The actual assessment, as ever, needs to be based on clear principles, with established criteria. Is it enough, for example, for the student to produce the desired result, or are there process issues to be observed as well? Should the event be recorded on video, so as to have a permanent record?
- For formative assessment, such recording is desirable when practicable, and immediacy of feedback is important.

Notes

There is more scope for the use of simulation than you might think. Have you thought of:

- "In-tray" exercises, in which the practitioner is faced with a pile of memos, reports, telephone messages and emails, such as she might find on her return from holiday, and a set period within which to prioritise them and respond appropriately?
- "Alternative history" exercises: the participant is presented with a (fabricated) article or report which presents research findings which are at variance with the conventional wisdom on a subject: he then has to prepare a response outlining how such evidence—if true—would impact on what we already think we know about the subject?
- Decision mazes in which everyone starts with a case-study, and several alternative courses of action: each choice leads to a different outcome, which is described together with further alternatives, and so on.

Resources
11 Collaborative assessment

Description

Having students work together, rather than individually, to produce a project or presentation.

Indications

- Use this approach when you want students to learn from each other, particularly in terms of drawing on previous experiences
- or when the material is too much reasonably to be covered by one individual
- or for a practical exercise which requires more than one person to complete it (such as a surveying exercise), or where equipment and resources are limited, and need to be shared (in some lab settings).

Cautions

- Working in groups with limited teacher guidance calls for a degree of maturity on the part of the students, and probably a certain amount of social cohesion within the group as a whole. Do not try it with a group which is still "forming" or "storming". Do not try it where there is any prior evidence of bullying or harassment.
- This is particularly the case in relation to relatively long-term projects which require effective management to be exercised by group members over their own efforts, especially where out-of-class research etc. is called for.
- In practical terms, it is extremely difficult to use this approach in conjunction with an anonymous-marking system.

Special considerations

Care needs to be taken with the composition of the groups: is it more desirable to work in:
- mixed-ability groups, so that the weaker members can learn from the stronger?
- or "streamed" groups, so that the tutor can spend more time with the weaker groups?
- Self-selected groups, based on shared interests if each group is undertaking a slightly different project? Note that social considerations are quite likely to contaminate "shared interest" choices, which may or may not matter. Note the importance of thinking through the equal opportunities implications before accepting this apparently easy option.

Attention similarly needs to be devoted to the awarding of marks or grades for the associated assignment. There is always the possibility that one or members of the group will not "pull their weight", and may therefore jeopardise the assessment of their colleagues, or coast to a good mark on their backs. You can:
- call for individual assignments, based on the work done in common, but assessed conventionally. This is the safest method but can undermine the required co-operative culture, if individuals know that they can "break away" when it comes to the final assessment.
- allocate the same mark to everyone in the group, with the attendant problems identified above.
 allocate a total mark to the group (mark for the project x number of members) and let them work out themselves how it is to be divided up. This is a radical approach which requires considerable sophistication and negotiation skills on the part of the members of the group, and may constitute an abrogation of the teacher's appropriate authority.

• award individual marks regardless of the work being group-based. This is bound to be subjective, and further subject to your prejudices and preferences for some students (yes, even you and me!)

• Call for a common group report, and allocate the same mark to everyone for that (out of perhaps 60% or so of the total marks for the assignment), but then allow individuals to submit additional work for the remaining 40% of the marks: this is probably the best compromise.

Notes

• See the pages on Using the Group for general considerations about groupwork: these brief notes are only concerned with assessable group projects, not syndicate groups etc.

• Clear briefing for group-based tasks is essential. Since it is in their nature that much of the work will be invisible to the teacher, and normal considerations are complicated by issues of group processes, you should always provide a written briefing which covers most of the possible eventualities (such as what happens if a group member is sick for a substantial part of the project), and be transparent about the procedures.

Resources
Summary of Feedback received from Associate Deans (Teaching & Learning) on Faculty Moderation Practices

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

‘In 2009, the issue of anonymous assessment was discussed by staff and students in FAHSS on numerous occasions. Background reading for the discussions in FAHSS was a report, which was considered at the Assessment Standing Committee meeting in December 2008, which had been tabled at the faculty-level TLC meeting in March 2009. However, as that meeting was not attended by the student representative, members of the TLC decided to dedicate the FAHSS panel discussion during Teaching month in May 2009 to issues relating to students’ perceptions about biasness in formal exam marking, fears of such bias and their overall confidence level in the University’s formal assessment process.

Since then several robust discussions have taken place within the Faculty. Issues raised included concerns about pedagogical and practical implications.

The main arguments against concerned the broad teaching and learning philosophy in the humanities and social sciences.

It was noted that while anonymous assessment practices intend to ensure objectivity in marking of exam papers:

- not all units in FAHSS have exams (see also music, theatre and language units which rely on live performance aspects);
- tutorials form an important part of assessment over the year;
- students who request letters of recommendation will only receive details as per their academic records.

The following practical concerns were also raised:

- the impossibility of “true” anonymous assessment; and
- the logistical difficulties of running anonymous assessments would require more staff resourcing.

It was agreed that the Faculty is not in favour of anonymous assessment as personal knowledge of the students' work is essential in the Arts. It was also noted that checks and balances are already in place to ensure equity in marking (e.g. double marking, clear policies on re-marking by third parties, benchmarking, moderating marks / grades, sampling by external partners / industry experts, etc.)

With regard to the latter, practices differ from discipline to discipline, but academic and professional staff in FAHSS feel that their respective practices satisfy the highest standards.’

Dr Alex Ludewig
UWA Business School

In response to the request about moderation practices the following approaches are used in the Business School.

1) Guidelines are issues for the distribution of marks in all degrees offered in the school.

2) multiple markers (eg, several tutors for a unit either each mark the full paper or each tutor marks only a single question for all papers), and

3) Board of Examiner meetings are held for specific programs/disciplines where the spread of marks is discussed.

Professor Phil Hancock

Faculty of Law

‘The Law School operates a system of anonymous assessment - and indeed has done so successfully now for over 30 years. During the recent enquiry into a possible University-wide scheme of anonymous assessment, Law students expressed satisfaction with the Law School's scheme. There is therefore no need for "moderation processes" and no appropriate advice that I can give you.’

Winthrop Professor Peter Handford

Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

‘The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences has a clear policy on assessment which promotes use of multiple tools for assessment at different intervals. All assessments are required to adhere to the Faculty Assessment policy to ensure practices are valid, fair, flexible, feasible, culturally appropriate and incorporate clearly defined assessment criteria. Learning activities and assessment are clearly aligned with stated learning outcomes. This is demonstrated in the curriculum maps for each undergraduate course, which are available for all students and staff. Assessment procedures are reviewed by year level committees, assessment committees and/or examination committees.

There has been an increased emphasis on formative assessment using the learning management system where appropriate so students are consistently aware of their strengths and areas for further improvement. During clinical years there are opportunities for students to be observed and be provided with direct verbal feedback on their observed performance.

In written examinations we encourage assessors to write down model answers with each question where constructed responses are expected from students. This removes any error of bias. The assessment especially in year five and six is of an integrated nature where different disciplines contribute together and so marking is also done by different assessors independently of each other.

In some units marking is done by independent markers using these model answers and unit coordinator randomly picks few from each assessor to check the accuracy of marking.'
Performance based Assessment

Objective Structured Clinical Examination is a major assessment conducted at different intervals during the medical course. This comprises multiple tasks/stations to be completed by each student. Although the tasks allocated are same for all students the logistics of the examination does not allow assessing all students at one time by one assessor. Similarly a number of simulated patients contribute to this assessment which is difficult to be standardised. The Faculty therefore uses Modified Rothman’s approach as part of its Standard setting and students are fully aware of it.

1. Performance on each OSCE station will be scored on a 20 point pre-determined mark comprising a Checklist Score (out of 14 marks) and a Global Rating Score (out of 6 marks). The Checklist Score relates to completion of the tasks at each observed station. At some of the stations patients also rate students on a scale of 2. Where patients’ score are used they are integrated within 14 marks of the checklist.

2. The Global Score is the Examiner’s overall impression of student’s global competence on a scale from 0 (Dangerous/Unassessable) to 6 (Outstanding). This means that:
   - those who score above 3 have demonstrated acceptable performance
   - those who score 3 have demonstrated borderline performance
   - those who score less than 3 have demonstrated unacceptable performance

3. When the total Checklist and Global marks for the exam are collated, the median score for each station-marked borderline is averaged to give the pass mark for the exam.

4. Those who score to the upper part of the Borderline Range pass the exam.

5. Those who score in the lower part of the Borderline Range require remediation and reassessment, unless grades in other units determine they obtain a conceded pass or absolute fail, as determined by the Board of Examiners.'

**Associate Professor Sandra Carr**

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**Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences**

Feedback to be provided by Dr Brenton Knott at the end of February 2010
Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee - examinations issue

Summary

Student Services has been asked whether publication of the end-of-semester examination timetable could be brought forward, ideally to the beginning of semester. In our view, current procedures produce a high quality timetable at the earliest practical date in the semester.

Current Practice

In week 1 or 2 of each semester Student Administration contacts from Faculties, Schools & Disciplines requesting information for the Examination Office for the end-of-semester examinations. Two weeks is allowed for the provision of the required information.

The Examinations Officer has access to 17 key venues suitable for examinations. The seating capacity is approximately 1950. 2 hour and 3 hour examinations that will start at the same time are allocated to different venues to avoid disturbing candidates; in the main large enrolment units are scheduled at the beginning of the period to allow sufficient time for marking. Individual examiner preferences are also frequently accommodated. We aim to publish a timetable that is to the maximum extent possible clash free, complete and stable. Moving an examination to another slot and / or day after publication is something we seek to avoid given the inconvenience caused to many. It is therefore important that the timetable only factor students who remain enrolled after the last withdrawal date.

In Semester 2, 2009 the timetable was released on Wednesday 17 September (Week 8), six and a half weeks before examinations commenced on Saturday 31 October. You will note from the figures presented below (Appendix) that in Semester 2, 2009 Weeks 1 – 7, 3,527 students withdrew from examinable units. From Weeks 8 – 13 only 238 further students withdrew. By publishing the timetable in Week 8 we were able to produce a high quality timetable with all students knowing the day, time and location of their examination. Only ~140 students had to have individual arrangements made.

We have surveyed a number of other institutions to discover their practice:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Provisional Timetable</th>
<th>Final Timetable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANU</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4- 5 weeks before exams commence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uni of SA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>6 weeks before exams commence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uni of Otago</td>
<td>without rooms mid April mid September</td>
<td>3 weeks before exams commence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSW</td>
<td>week 8 of a 12 week teaching period without venues</td>
<td>Week 9 with venues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtin</td>
<td>6 weeks before exam period</td>
<td>4 weeks before exams commence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTAS</td>
<td>week 8 of a 13 week teaching period</td>
<td>4 weeks before exams commence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWA</td>
<td>week 8 of a 13 week teaching period</td>
<td>6 weeks before exams commence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix

Units with examinations in Sem-2
exam period 2009

2009 Semester 2 Withdrawals (494 units)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre Semester</th>
<th>8906</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>1372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>722</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>226</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Jon Stubbs*
Director, Student Services
Assessment 2020

Seven propositions for assessment reform in higher education

Preamble

Universities face substantial change in a rapidly evolving global context. The challenges of meeting new expectations about academic standards in the next decade and beyond mean that assessment will need to be rethought and renewed.

This document provides a stimulus for those involved in the redevelopment of assessment practices. It draws on the expertise of a group of highly experienced assessment researchers, academic development practitioners and senior academic managers to identify current best thinking about the ways assessment will need to address immediate and future demands.

Underpinning principles

> Assessment is a central feature of teaching and the curriculum. It powerfully frames how students learn and what students achieve. It is one of the most significant influences on students’ experience of higher education and all that they gain from it. The reason for an explicit focus on improving assessment practice is the huge impact it has on the quality of learning.

> Assessment is the making of judgements about how students’ work meets appropriate standards. Teachers, markers and examiners have traditionally been charged with that responsibility. However, students themselves need to develop the capacity to make judgements about both their own work and that of others in order to become effective continuing learners and practitioners.

> Assessment plays a key role in both fostering learning and the certification of students. However, unless it first satisfies the educational purpose of ensuring students can identify high quality work and can relate this knowledge to their own work, the likelihood that they will reach high standards themselves is much reduced.

The purposes of the propositions

The propositions have been developed to guide assessment thinking in the light of the increasing focus on standards, and to address criticisms of current practice. They set directions for change designed to enhance learning achievements for all students and improve the quality of their experience.

The propositions, however, do not stand alone. They must be considered within overall curriculum thinking alongside teaching and learning strategies and changing disciplinary content. They need to be supported by a range of development opportunities to foster the shifts in thinking and practice on the part of teaching staff and students that they imply.

The propositions are posed in a form that needs to be embraced and be taken up at different levels – specifically, by educational institutions, by programs and courses of study, and by those responsible for teaching and learning. They have implications for resources and the nature of workload; when addressed thoughtfully they may contribute to reduced costs through a better focusing of effort on those features of the curriculum and teaching that have most direct impact on learning.
ASSESSMENT HAS MOST EFFECT WHEN ...

1. ... assessment is used to engage students in learning that is productive.

   i. ... assessment is designed to focus students on learning
      To improve student engagement in learning, and to support better quality learning outcomes, it is necessary that assessment tasks are designed to direct student attention to what needs to be learned and to the activities that best lead to this. Effective learning can be hampered by assessment tasks that focus student attention on grades and marks or reproductive thinking.

   ii. ... assessment is recognised as a learning activity that requires engagement on appropriate tasks.
      Assessment tasks should be significant learning activities in themselves, and not only enable judgements to be made about what has been learned. The potency of student engagement in learning is enhanced when assessment tasks require substantial involvement over time, and when they are designed in an interlinked, constructive, organised and coherent sequence.

2. ... feedback is used to actively improve student learning.

   i. ... feedback is informative and supportive and facilitates a positive attitude to future learning.
      Students benefit from clear and helpful feedback on their learning. Everyday learning activities as well as special tasks and tests provide opportunities for the provision of feedback. This places responsibility on staff to plan assessment in order to (a) develop their own skills in providing quality feedback, and (b) develop in students the skills they need to provide sound feedback to each other.

   ii. ... students seek and use timely feedback to improve the quality of their learning and work.
      Students’ own skills of judgement are developed by their utilisation of feedback, guidance provided by those already inducted into the culture and standards of the discipline, and opportunities to grow their own skills of critical appraisal. They need to be able to seek and employ feedback from a variety of sources to develop a full range of outcomes from their studies.

   iii. ... students regularly receive specific information, not just marks and grades, about how to improve the quality of their work.
      Marks and grades provide little information to students about specific qualities of their work and do not indicate how it might be improved. While marks and grades may provide a crude tracking measure of how well students are doing, they do not help students move beyond their present standard of performance. Specific and detailed information is needed to show students what has been done well, what has not, and how their work could be better.

3. ... students and teachers become responsible partners in learning and assessment.

   i. ... students progressively take responsibility for assessment and feedback processes.
      The overall aims of higher education include developing students’ critical thinking abilities, which include self-critique, independent judgement, and other skills for continuing learning. Personal responsibility for assessing performance and providing and responding to feedback is a desired graduate outcome. It is necessary and appropriate for university programs to foster this development throughout the curriculum.

   ii. ... students develop and demonstrate the ability to judge the quality of their own work and the work of others against agreed standards.
      Students need confidence and competence in making informed judgements about what they produce. They need to develop the ability to evaluate the quality, completeness and/or accuracy of work with respect to appropriate standards, and have the confidence to express their judgements with conviction. This requires deliberately managed assessment processes and practice that relates to judgements required in professional practice and mature community engagement.

   iii. ... dialogue and interaction about assessment processes and standards are commonplace between and among staff and students.
      Assessment activities and standards require disciplinary and contextual interpretation if they are to be understood, yet discussion of processes and reference points for determining standards is relatively rare. Assessment judgements are more consistent when those making them are able to reach consensus as to ways of establishing levels of performance. Student understanding of processes they can use to judge their own performance are similarly enhanced when they participate in dialogue about them with peers and teachers.

4. ... students are inducted into the assessment practices and cultures of higher education.

   i. ... assessment practices are carefully structured in early stages of courses to ensure students make a successful transition to university study in their chosen field.
      For students to become independent and self-managing learners, they need to be supported in the development and acquisition of the skills they need for learning, including those of assessment. Critical to this attainment is early engagement in manageable assessed tasks to build confidence, and the expectation that learning requires not only an investment of effort but also the taking of initiative. This contributes to alleviating anxiety around assessment information, instructions, guidance, and performance. Early assessment provides information to both students and teachers on progress and achievement, and allows for identification of students in need of additional support.

   ii. ... assessment practices respond to the diverse expectations and experiences of entering students.
      Students come to higher education with great diversity in preparedness and understanding of what it involves. To ensure that all can engage equitably with assessment tasks, the implicit rules and expectations around what is required for success in any discipline need to be made accessible to students and opportunities provided for them to develop the academic skills they require to perform those tasks.
5. **assessment for learning is placed at the centre of subject and program design.**

   **i. assessment design is recognised as an integral part of curriculum planning from the earliest stages of course development.**

   Assessment is not an ‘add-on’ to the curriculum structure of a program. It needs to be considered from the outset of course design and intimately embedded and linked to considerations of student learning as part of the curriculum. Assessment tasks, types and means of deployment need to be fully aligned with all other aspects of the curriculum.

   **ii. assessment is organized holistically across subjects and programs with complementary integrated tasks.**

   The development of a full range of graduate attributes requires a systematic approach to assessment that builds and enhances those attributes through tasks that are diverse, complementary to each other and embedded strategically throughout a program of study. Integrated whole-of-program curriculum design needs to incorporate assessment and feedback as well as learning outcomes and teaching and learning activities. If carried out in this way, an emphasis on feedback for learning can be the focus of teaching and learning engagement in the early curriculum, leading to capstone and integrated assessment in later years.

6. **assessment for learning is a focus for staff and institutional development.**

   **i. professional and scholarly approaches to assessment by academic staff are developed, deployed, recognised and rewarded by institutions.**

   Academics need particular support in developing expertise required for subject and program assessment responsibilities. Such support could include mentoring, dialogue with peers in informal and formal moderation activities or formal courses. However, while enhanced assessment skills are essential, their acquisition is not sufficient to ensure good assessment practice. Institutions should have explicit requirements that professional and scholarly proficiency in assessment is necessary for satisfactory teaching performance. Further, leadership and exemplary performance in assessment matters should be recognised for promotion, awards and grants.

   **ii. assessment practices and the curriculum should be reviewed in the light of graduate and employer perceptions of the preparedness of graduates.**

   The impact of courses on student learning, and the role of assessment in them, can only be fully evaluated following graduation. Common post-graduation measures (e.g. the Course Experience Questionnaire, the Graduate Destinations Survey) presently provide insufficiently detailed information for the improvement of programs. In particular, they do not enable assessment and feedback processes to be sufficiently monitored. Systematic study of the impact of such experiences on graduates (at, say, one and five years from graduation) and employers’ perceptions of such preparation and standards are needed to ensure that courses are effective in the longer term.

   **iii. assessment of student achievements is judged against consistent national and international standards that are subject to continuing dialogue, review and justification within disciplinary and professional communities.**

   The quality of awards in higher education will be increasingly scrutinised nationally and internationally. Assessment practice needs to provide convincing evidence of students’ accomplishments that can be judged against external reference points. Disciplinary and professional communities (both within and beyond the academy) are the focus for ongoing collaboration and dialogue to determine, review and moderate academic achievement standards. Such collaboration and dialogue requires clarity of expectations and persuasive evidence of learning outcomes.

7. **assessment provides inclusive and trustworthy representation of student achievement.**

   **i. interim assessment results used for feedback on learning and progress do not play a significant role in determining students’ final grades.**

   For purposes of certification, care must be taken to avoid the formal use of early grades that do not represent the outcomes reached by course or program completion. Entry-level knowledge, learning rates and final achievement levels differ. Although learning itself is cumulative, progressively adding marks throughout the learning period towards the final grade can distort representation of end-of-study achievement. What is important is using interim outcomes to improve learning.

   **ii. evidence of overall achievement to determine final grades is based on assessment of integrated learning**

   Many separate low-value pieces of assessment can fragment learning without providing evidence of how students’ knowledge and skills from a unit of study are interrelated. This is often compounded across subjects, leading students to experience knowledge as disconnected elements. Strong evidence of achievement of the totality of outcomes can be provided by larger-scale tasks that require students to demonstrate coherent integrated learning, not isolated or atomistic performance.

   **iii. certification accurately and richly portrays graduates’ and students’ achievements to inform future careers and learning.**

   An academic transcript that lists subject titles and grades provides limited information to students, employers or educational institutions. Increased scope and sophistication of the reporting of achievement is needed to communicate outcomes well. Two areas for improvement are: **veracity**, in grades that are fully and robustly aligned with learning outcomes and standards; and, **richness**, in the documentation of student accomplishments to convey information about what students can and cannot do.
Suggestions for use

These propositions can be used to focus debate and action on those features of assessment that have the greatest impact on learning and the quality of courses.

They might be most productively used by:

> planning teams and program directors in new course design and course review and renewal
> teaching and learning committees and academic boards, institutionally and locally
> groups of Associate Deans and Directors of Teaching and Learning within and across Faculties
> those running courses and workshops for academic staff on assessment, and particularly within Graduate Certificates in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
> those running leadership programs to ensure that leaders at all levels have a strong appreciation of assessment issues and directions
> those with academic development roles who consult with staff and course teams
> those guiding staff-student discussions about the improvement of courses

The challenge is to consider how these might be best pursued within existing cost constraints. This must necessarily involve deciding which assessment tasks should be discontinued in order to provide space for more worthwhile initiatives.

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