

Teaching in Further Education - Delivery and Assessment

Unit Number: DV5V 36

Section 2: Assess Learning and Give Feedback

Outcome 2

The East of Scotland Staff Development Collaborative Group

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This document is available in alternative formats. If required please contact your Centre.

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Introduction to Section 2

What this Section is About

This Section is about the assessment of learning. Firstly, it explores the different purposes of assessment from a summative and formative perspective. It then examines the summative perspective in more detail, considering the design and implementation of assessment. This includes consideration of the quality assurance principles of assessment; how and when (within the learning programme) it should be planned, implemented (including how assessment should be differentiated to meet the needs of individual learners) and evaluated.

The Section then considers the importance of formative assessment as an essential part of the whole learning process and discusses the processes of giving effective feedback on assessment in terms of ensuring that learners can use it as a valuable tool for setting their future learning goals.

The final part of this Section discusses the formal recording and reporting procedures that are an essential element of learner achievement.

There is a mixture of reflective, developmental and review activities that will help you to develop your own skills in assessing and giving feedback to learners. These activities will give you the knowledge and experience to complete the Summative Assessment activities of this Unit (outlined below).

Objectives of this Section

When you have completed this Section, you will have covered the following knowledge and/or skills:

- College policy and procedures on assessment and feedback including those for alternative assessment arrangements
- awarding body standards for assessment
- timing and conditions for assessment including alternative assessment arrangements for learners with additional needs
- use of criteria, marking, marking schemes and sample solutions to measure competence/knowledge/skills
- making fair and consistent assessment decisions
- giving oral and written feedback to promote learning, affirm achievement and inform future learning goals
- recording evidence against agreed criteria
- record keeping: checklists and schedules, attainment records, use of ICT
- ways of using assessment information to maintain standards

- reporting to other agencies

Other Resources Required for this Section

The notes and activities of this Section should not be used in isolation from the real learning environment. Ideally, the candidate should work with a teaching and learning mentor from their own or another institution.

There are several references included to useful websites so access to the internet will be required. Weblinks are likely to change therefore you should be prepared to use a Google search to find a similar or updated website if you cannot access the one suggested.

The candidate must have access to all the relevant policies and procedures that pertain to the organisation in which they teach.

This Unit is aligned with Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges.

<http://www.fepdfscotland.co.uk>

Approximate study time for this Section

A notional study time of 10 hours has been allocated for this Section but this does not include time for any additional reading that you might undertake.

Accreditation of Prior Learning

If you have already achieved your A1 (Assess Candidates Using a Range of Methods) or D33 (Assess Candidates Using Differing Sources of Evidence), you will not have to work through this section. You will be given credit for Outcome 2 if you can provide evidence of current competence – this could be a signed statement from your current line manager.

Assessment Information

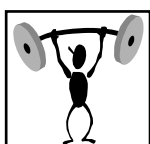
Formative Assessment

As you work through this Section you will find the following types of activities and symbols:



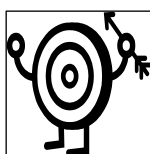
Reflective Activity

This type of activity encourages you to think about the information you have been given and how it applies to your College's context. . There is no need to submit these to your tutor for marking and feedback.



Developmental Activity

This type of activity encourages you to find out more about a concept and to form your own opinion about it. These activities are for your personal professional development and again you need not submit these to your tutor.



Review Activity

This activity gives you the opportunity to get some feedback from your tutor. These activities will help your tutor to check that you are ready to undertake the summative assessment tasks.

You are encouraged to complete as many of these activities as you can, as they are an important part of your learning experience. Many of them also support or contribute directly to your summative assessment.

Summative Assessment

When you have completed this Section you will be ready to start Summative Assessment Task 2. Your tutor will provide you with detailed information.

- Produce a **written assessment plan** for a Unit that you are responsible for delivering (this may be the same assessment plan as produced in the Planning Unit).
- Your tutor will ask to see the **written feedback** that you have given to at least one candidate where they will expect you to demonstrate skills that promote learning, affirm achievement and help the candidate to inform future learning goals.
- Your tutor will observe you giving **oral feedback** to at least one candidate. This may be through direct observation of your feedback or the tutor may agree with you to accept video, audio recorded or transcribed notes of oral feedback; the latter forms must be prior-agreed

with your tutor.

- Produce a **written reflective account** (750 words) justifying your assessment decisions for both the oral and written feedback that you are assessed on above.
- Produce complete **assessment records** that meet your organisation's record keeping requirements for a group of learners that you are responsible for.

Total summarised requirement:

- one written assessment plan
- tutor examination of one piece of written feedback on an assessment decision given by you to a candidate
- tutor observation of at least one episode of you giving oral feedback to a candidate on an assessment decision (this may be direct or indirect)
- one 750 word reflective account justifying the assessment decisions made for the pieces of written and oral feedback for which you were practically assessed.
- complete assessment records produced and maintained by you according to awarding body's and your organisation's procedures.

In Summary

Assessment is often considered as a process that “drives” learning. However, different learners will adopt different approaches to assessment and we should try to adopt an approach to assessment that will enhance the learning experience and become an integral part of it as opposed to being only an instrument of measurement.

Assessment can be examined from a formative or summative perspective ie it is a process used to inform future learning goals (formative) or to measure the learning that has taken place (summative). Summative assessment should have a formative element to it but it is carried out in a formalised context that adheres to set quality assurance standards. It is important that we always aim to make fair and consistent assessment judgements particularly when carrying out summative assessment of a learning programme and from this perspective it is necessary to ensure that assessment instruments are designed in a valid manner ie they are actually measuring what the learning outcomes have asked that they measure and that we are applying equally rigorous conditions of assessment and “marking” at the same standard as other tutors (and ourselves at a different time point). Furthermore, instruments of assessment should be

designed to be flexible in that they meet the needs of the DDA (2005) (Disability Discrimination Act).

Tutors need to be aware of when and in what way assessment arrangements are required to be adapted to meet the needs of individual learners and they should seek expert advice according to the individual needs of the learner both internally and externally.

It is important that informal, formative assessment tasks are built in to a programme of learning and that they help to inform the summative assessment processes which should be integrated wherever possible to avoid assessment overload.

Giving learners feedback to help them to identify future learning goals is arguably the most important skill of the tutor in both summative and formative assessment processes. It is important that you develop skills to make your feedback effective in both written and oral contexts. These skills can be developed through ensuring that feedback is done in good time, in a constructive manner and suits the individual learner's needs.

Finally, as part of good professional conduct, it is important that you accurately record and report your summative assessment decisions according to Institutional and other stakeholder requirements.

An Introduction to Assessing Learning and Giving Feedback

Why Do We Assess Learning?

Most of us tend to relate the assessment of learning to the examinations that we sat during our school, University or College days. Can you remember “cramming” for them and then immediately forgetting much of it within the next week?



Activity 1: The purpose of assessment

What do you think the purpose of assessment is in your experience of learning and teaching?

Summative and Formative Assessment

Assessment is done because it is the requirement of a Unit of study or an institutional requirement. We naturally tend to associate assessment with the **formal** and recorded measurement or demonstration of learning that has happened. This is known as **summative** assessment; learners may pass, fail or be graded. Summative assessment is a frequent topic for debate by many educational researchers in terms of how it affects the learning process, with many stressing the importance of assessment as a driving force for the learning process that acts as a powerful factor in the approach that learners take towards their programme. Think back to your own exam “crams” and essay writing days. Would you have approached the whole programme in the same manner if there had not been that looming assessment at the end?

Assessment should be considered as an important instrument **for** learning and it is a vital component **of** the learning process. **Formative** assessment is the process whereby assessment is used to identify gaps in a learner's progress to thereby improve their learning by **feedback** and by developing plans to fill these gaps.

Formative assessment processes are often integrated into the delivery process in an informal way but you should remember that summative assessment can be used as formative assessment, particularly where the learner has been unsuccessful in the summative assessment but has an opportunity to be re-assessed. It is important that tutors individualise their feedback to learners; by

ensuring that each learner can identify exactly where they need to develop their work, they can use the formative processes to identify their future learning goals (sometimes referred to as “feed-forward”). In the course of studying this Section and completing the associated activities, you should improve your own practice in making assessment a “high-learning pay-off experience for learners” (Race, 2005).



Activity 2: Identifying opportunities for formative and summative assessment

Consider the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Plan that you produced in Part 1 of the Summative Assessment for the Planning Unit and identify examples of formative and summative assessment opportunities in the Plan.

Highlight them in a way that you will be able to recognise them.

You may wish to re-visit these when you have developed your formative and summative assessment techniques.

Summative Assessment

Summative Assessment Terminology

One area that many new tutors find difficult to grasp is having a common understanding of the summative assessment terminologies that are used by the awarding body and your College. It is very important that we do try and get to grips with this, as it may help us to avoid one of the most common pitfalls for new College tutors; over-assessing learners because of a fear of failing to meet the requirements of the awarding body.



Activity 3: Assessment terminology

In the table below, the left hand column contains some assessment terminology whilst the right hand column asks for definitions for these terms.

Fill the gaps.

If you are having difficulty finding the answers, you may wish to consult a quality expert or experienced internal verifier in your own College.

You may also find it useful to go to the SQA website and download the document “Guide to Assessment <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/33153.html> This document is an excellent guide to understanding formal assessment procedures pertaining to the SQA¹, its various forms and how to ensure that you apply a standardised approach to making assessment decisions (see later).

Assessment related term	Definition
Internal assessment	

¹ You may work with other awarding bodies such as “City and Guilds”, EdExcel etc. They will also have documentation that you can refer to on their websites as there may be some differences.

	An exercise where the learner is asked to choose a correct answer from a selection
Restricted response paper	
	Assessment conditions where the learner is allowed access to some other resources such as books or notes
	A log or journal of activities carried out by the learner often used to authenticate evidence produced in work-based vocational qualifications (such as SVQs)
Witness testimony	

	Assessment carried out by fellow learners in the learning group
Simulation	
Written evidence	
Appropriate instrument of assessment	
Performance evidence	

Oral evidence	
Assessment strategy	
Assignment	

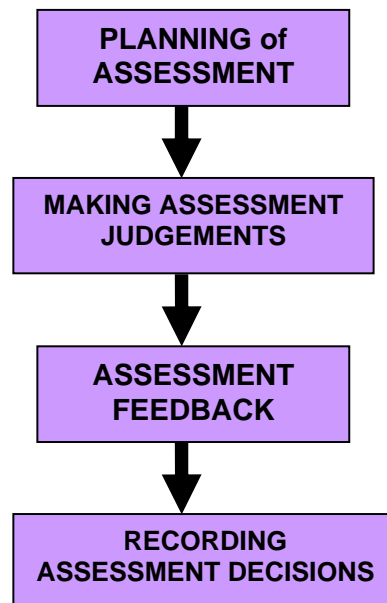
Activity solutions to this table can be found at the end of this study section.

Different methods of assessment can be found at the following website:

http://www.learningandteaching.info/teaching/assess_form.htm

The Stages of Summative Assessment

The stages of summative assessment are outlined in the flow diagram below. The following notes will detail the requirements of each stage.





Activity 4: When to assess?

When do you believe is the best time for summative assessment to take place within a learning programme that you have responsibility for?

www.learningandteaching.info/teaching/contents.htm

(Go to the area on scheduling/schemes of work).

In vocational qualifications (such as SVQs) assessors are expected to be able to “negotiate an assessment plan” with the learner on an individual basis. This involves discussing the plan with the learner and allowing them to express their views as to when they will be ready to be assessed.² This approach to assessment planning is recognising that assessment is more than an isolated judgement of one specific performance (Armitage et al, 2003) and, in many respects, the principles of such negotiation should be employed in other qualifications, particularly when individuals have been unable to participate in aspects of the learning programme because of genuinely mitigating circumstances. It is important that individual learners are given the opportunity to negotiate assessment deadlines in justifiable circumstances.

An example of a learning, teaching and assessment plan (or scheme of work) that includes assessment “plans” for a Higher National Unit as well as an assessment plan for a vocational qualification are included in Appendices A and B respectively of this Section.

College Policy on Assessment

It is likely that your College has one or possibly more policies that relate to the summative assessment process. There are likely to be procedures in place that cover issues relating to the design of assessment instruments, the implementation of the assessment process, the checking of the assessment results and the recording of assessment decisions. These will be discussed further but it is very important that you always follow your own institution’s policy on these issues. Some of the activities that follow will ask you to discuss or identify these procedures and you should try to identify where they can be found within your own institution.

² This is part of the standards required if you undertake your “A” (assessor) Units in order to assess SVQs or NVQs.

Integration of Assessment

It is not always necessary to assess each learning outcome, performance criterion or indeed Unit separately as there is often overlap or continuity that makes it more sensible to put these things together to make one assessment instrument. Indeed, it is quite possible that your College suggests a policy of integrating assessment wherever possible. Integration of assessment for different Units or parts of Units is good practice for several reasons.

- It helps to avoid over-assessment of learners which can help to maintain their motivation.
- It reduces the time that tutors spend implementing and marking assessments and is, therefore, more efficient.
- It makes the verification process more efficient.
- It allows more time for the learning and teaching processes.
- It is seen as good practice by quality assurance bodies such as HMIE and SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority).

When assessments are integrated, there are some quality assurance issues that need to be considered associated with different qualifications. In SVQs, for example, when assessments have been integrated, it will be necessary to **cross-reference** the work to show that all the performance criteria of the standards have been covered. However, in other qualifications, such as HNCs and National Qualifications, this may not be necessary and you may only be required to ensure that the learning outcomes are covered.

Some tutors are very concerned that, by integrating assessments, they are compromising coverage and find it easier to repeat areas rather than integrate. This cannot be considered good practice. One of the most common complaints of today's learners is of the overburden of summative assessment which can be de-motivating, stressful and can even lead to the withdrawal of learners from their course.

“How and when assessment takes place is one of the more important critical factors which can influence people's decisions to drop out”. (Race, 2005)

Quality Assurance Principles of Assessment Design and Implementation

College policies on learning, teaching and assessment often make much of the design and adjustment of assessment processes and instruments to address the following qualities:

- validity,
- reliability,
- practicability.

In Scotland we are also required by the Scottish Qualifications Authority to make assessment valid and reliable as part of their quality assurance principles. So what does all this mean?

Assessment Validity

Validity of assessment means that the assessment process does measure what we say we are measuring and does demonstrate the knowledge and skills set out in the learning objective.

This means that assessment is:

- fit for purpose (eg practical skills are assessed by observation of these practical skills and not, for example, by describing the skill in writing)
- producing evidence that can be measured against the standards defined in the qualification
- allowing candidates to produce sufficient evidence to satisfy the standards of the qualification
- accessible to all candidates who are potentially able to achieve it.



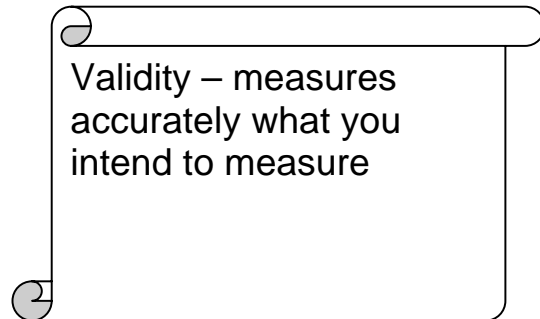
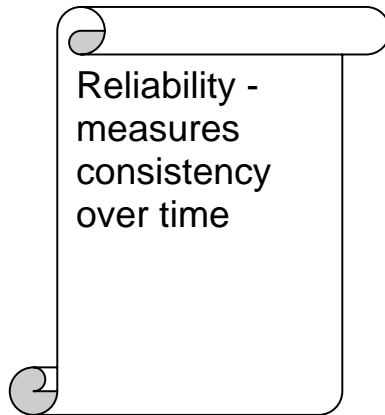
Activity 5: Assessment validity

How easy is it to create valid assessments? Race (2005) argues that although we often think that our assessment methods are valid, sometimes they are not.

Can you think of an occasion where an assessment favoured the candidates who had excellent written communication skills whilst disadvantaging those who were more challenged in their literacy skills, yet the learning outcome that was being assessed had very little to do with writing?

How could this learning outcome have been assessed to ensure that the assessment instrument was more valid?

It may help if you look at some examples of assessment instruments and the associated qualification standards and consider their validity.



Assessment Reliability

Quality assurance **external verifiers** from awarding bodies will look for evidence of assessment reliability as well as checking that instruments of assessment are valid. Assessment processes are said to be reliable when, no matter who is responsible for assessing, or when they are assessing or in what context they are assessing, there are consistent assessment decisions made on a candidate's performance.

It is necessary to put procedures in place within the institution to ensure that assessment decisions are reliable by:

- having clearly defined performance and/or grade-related criteria (such as marking schemes and performance checklists)
- ensuring that they are generated using valid instruments of assessment that are produced under consistently applied conditions of assessment (eg “closed book” or “open book” etc.)
- ensuring the authenticity of a candidate's work.

Reliability can be put to the test through processes such as cross-marking or dual assessing of candidate practical performance. This is done as part of internal quality assurance procedures and is known as **internal verification**.

Most Colleges have their own system of internal verification for qualifications although in some cases it will be necessary to follow the national verification strategy of the qualification (this is particularly the case for SVQs).

Making Assessment Judgements

Using the Assessment Scheme

The **assessment scheme** is the **marking instructions** that you will use and it is likely to have been produced by the person who devised the assessment instrument. It is probable that a practical exercise will have a practical observation checklist that standardises the skills and performance that the tutor should be looking for when the candidate carries out the practical task. Below is an example which is part of an observation checklist for an assessment in planting out a soft landscaped area.

Candidate Name	Assists planting with correct spacing of plants	Assists planting with correct depth and diameter of hole	Assists with addition of improver/fertiliser where necessary	Assists by correct backfilling and firming in	Gives reason for selection of plants	Demonstrated safe working practice	Result

For written tests where open questions are asked (ie there is more than one possible answer to the question), it is necessary that the marking scheme gives as many of the possible valid solutions as possible as well as identifying the marks that will be allocated for the given response. It is very important that you follow the scheme precisely. An example of a marking scheme (identifying the pass mark* and two of the exemplar answers) for part of a short answer, closed book assessment is shown below:

Short answer question paper: Health, Safety, Welfare and Employment Legislation

Pass mark* =18+/30

1. Which piece of legislation protects information about people being passed around indiscriminately? (1)
The Data Protection Act(1)
2. Chemical substances are controlled by COSHH regulations. What does COSHH stand for? (2)
Control of Substances(1) Hazardous to Health(1)

In assignments and case studies, there is likely to be set criteria contained in the marking scheme (very like the performance checklist for a practical activity). You must follow these criteria and ensure that the piece of work is identifying all of the areas from the checklist.



Activity 6: Assessment checking procedures

Find out and write notes on what is the internal verification strategy for checking reliability and validity of assessment for the learning programmes that you are involved with.

Do you think that this is an efficient and effective quality assurance procedure?

What types of marking schemes/checklists do you use?

Do you have any further ways of standardising assessment processes (eg standardisation meetings, set protocols etc?)

Making Fair and Consistent Assessment Decisions

Even where the instrument of assessment is deemed to be valid, there is still the possibility that one assessor may make inconsistent assessment decisions (or apply different conditions of assessment) across learner groups or different assessors may disagree on assessment decisions regarding the same piece of work. The diagram below outlines some guidelines that may help you to be as fair and consistent as you can be when implementing the assessment process.

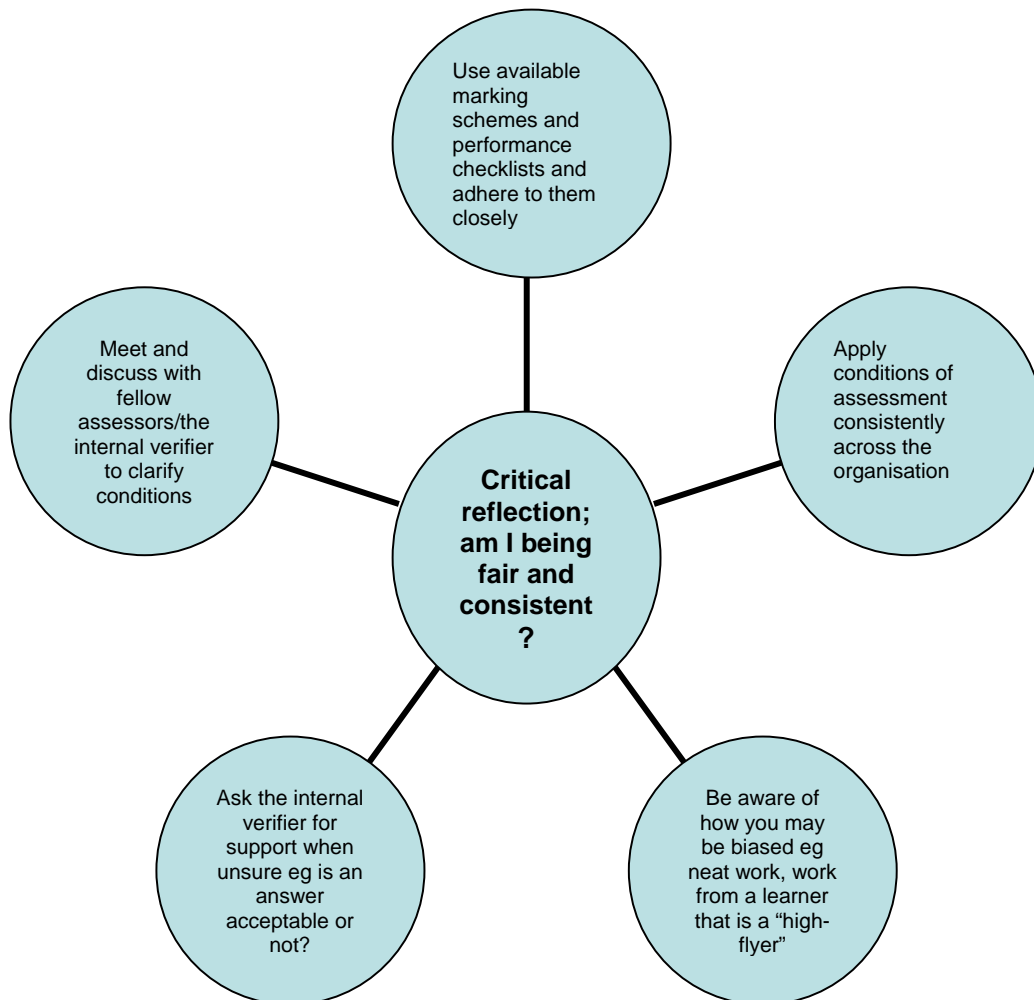


Figure 1: Elements of being fair and consistent when assessing



Activity 7: Fair and consistent assessment

Consider each of the elements of fairness and consistency in the diagram above. Consider issues that exist in your vocational area when trying to be fair and consistent.

How do you (or could you) overcome them?

Assessment Practicability

Assessments need to be both efficient and effective in terms of both resource requirement and time.

- If practical observations of a task are required, consideration needs to be given to the time and potential stress caused. For example, if an assessor has 40 candidates each of whom are waiting to carry out a 10-minute task, the question that arises in terms of practicability is, “Could the assessment be carried out in a more efficient manner, whilst maintaining its validity?”
- In some cases the need for consistency of resources can be a problem in practical contexts. For example, when assessing a candidate’s ability to decorate walls, the quality of the paint and the state of the walls used to assess decorating ability should be the same for all learners. It would not be fair for one learner to be given a very rough wall and cheap, thin paint whilst another learner has a smooth wall with good quality, opaque paint to work with.

Meeting the Assessment Needs of the Individual Learner

At this point in your career, you are likely to be using instruments of assessment that have been designed and internally verified for you; designing assessment instruments should come later on in your career. The instruments that you work with should have been designed to be “inclusive” ie they should be flexible in that they can meet the needs of those learners with additional support needs in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act, 2005.

What Makes an Instrument of Assessment flexible?

Generally speaking, the most useful way of adapting assessment instruments for disabled learners is to give **all** learners the element of choice rather than offering an alternative just to the disabled learner. In doing this, the choice can be made without necessarily forcing the disabled learner to disclose their disability or forcing adjustment. An example would be giving all learners the choice of having a Unit assessed either by portfolio or by written examination. In short, as long as the assessment criteria are being assessed to the same standard, the assessment method can be flexible (Cavanagh and Dickinson, 2006).

Further information about the design of “flexible” assessment instruments can be found at the following website about inclusive assessment practices (Sheffield Hallam University):

<http://www.shu.ac.uk/services/lti/accessibileassessments/>

Making Alternative Assessment Arrangements

Even in situations where assessments have been designed to be flexible, there will still be circumstances where the assessment has to be adjusted for some learners with additional support needs. This is part of inclusive practice and it is a legal requirement under the DDA (2005) that **reasonable adjustments** are made to assessment practices for disabled learners. These adjustments may include providing separate rooms, the use of signing or scribes and the use of IT equipment and software. It may be necessary in some circumstances to check that your arrangements are acceptable to the awarding body.

You are likely to have come up with some specific adjustments that are related to your own vocational area. Here are some general possibilities:

- flexible deadlines for submission of work
- support in researching books, the Internet and other literature for those unable to “browse” in the library
- adjustments to assignments such as allowing learners to submit a piece of work on video rather than in writing
- provision of extra study skills support
- comments and feedback given orally for formative purposes
- adjustments to the design or delivery of a test
- altering the mode of assessment entirely if the usual mode sets up unnecessary barriers.

Some specific possibilities include:

- a dyslexic learner may need a scribe, a reader or both for written tests
- a visually impaired learner may need an assessment paper to be provided in Braille.

Further information on this can be found on the Sheffield Hallam University site:

<http://www.shu.ac.uk/services/lti/accessibileassessments/>

It is very important that you follow the awarding body’s procedures and arrangements for adjusting assessment procedures and conditions. Making reasonable adjustments is not about making assessment easier for learners; it

is about making it more accessible. Sometimes it can be difficult to be sure when this line has been crossed. When in doubt, seek advice from the awarding body as well as advice from experts within your own organisation.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority website <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html> has a section on “assessment arrangements” which you should read to find out the correct procedures to follow when making alternative assessment arrangements.

This guide advises lecturers on steps to take when considering and making requests for assessment arrangements for disabled candidates or those identified as having additional support needs.

Assessment arrangements should ensure that all candidates have an equal opportunity to show that they can achieve the national standards required for Units and Courses.

Formative Assessment

Balancing summative and formative assessment processes in the learning programme

We should never forget the principle of assessment **for** learning; assessment's purpose is to measure knowledge and skills that have been learned for the purpose of identifying an individual's future learning goals.

Assessment should not be just about measuring information that has been transferred but should be part of the whole learning process. Find out about the concept of "Assessment is for Learning" and the three uses of assessment by going to the Learning and Teaching Scotland

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/assess/about/aboutaifl.asp>

- Assessment FOR Learning (supporting classroom learning and teaching)
- Assessment AS Learning (about learning how to learn)
- Assessment OF Learning.(gathering and interpreting the evidence)

Learners will often gain a great deal of confidence from informal, formative assessment processes. These can be made into a great deal of fun and ICT lends itself well to the development of quizzes, games etc that can be used with individuals or groups of learners.

Further information about the use of ICT to formatively assess learners as part of the learning process can be found in the Planning Unit Section 2 under the "ICT" section.



Activity 8: Formative assessment tasks

In the table below are a number of generic assessment methods that could be utilised to assess formatively. In the second column, identify whether you think that this method could be used in one of your teaching programmes (perhaps the programme that you know that you will be summatively assessed on). If it can be used, explain why you would use it, exactly how you would employ it and when.

This exercise may help you to consider the structure of some of your teaching sessions and prompt thoughts as to how you will integrate formative assessment processes into them.

Method of formative assessment	Could I use this method effectively?	Why I would use it, exactly how I would employ it and when I would use it?
Peer evaluation of a practical task		
Small group quiz		
Individual quiz		
Self-evaluation of a performance task		

Questioning		
Structured task (eg project, essay, video diary) for learner to undertake in own time		

You have probably come up with some useful and interesting ideas that can be incorporated into your lesson plans at the appropriate place. However, here are some simple useful websites and tips that may help you in the design of simple formative assessment tasks:

Hot Potatoes

<http://hotpot.uvic.ca/>

This website allows you to quickly develop crosswords, multiple-choice exercises and gap exercises that learners can use to consolidate their knowledge and quickly check their own progress.

There are many other such sites (some fee paying but many free) that will allow you to develop these simple exercises with ease.

Creating a PowerPoint Quiz

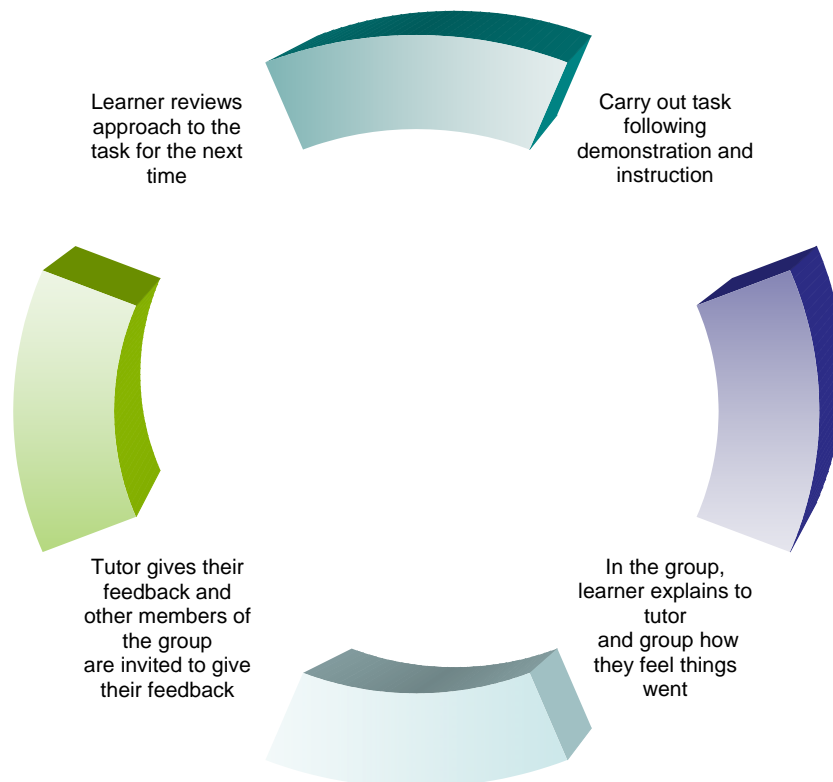
<http://www.computercompanion.com/LPMArticle.asp?ID=210>

Most of us are familiar with the basics of PowerPoint. This website will show you in easy steps how to create a simple electronic multiple choice quiz using this presentation software. It can become quick and easy with just a little practice. Such quizzes lend themselves to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) where learners can work at their own pace with slower learners being free from any potential embarrassment or discomfort.

Peer and Self-evaluation of Practical Tasks

Certain tasks tend to lend themselves more to peer assessment than others. It is important that feedback from others is going to be advantageous. For this purpose, tasks that do not require a high degree of very specific expertise can work better.

Practical tasks carried out with small groups of learners often lend themselves to a combination of self/tutor and peer evaluation that will help the learners to formulate action plans for future learning.



Whatever the model that formative assessment takes, always remember that its purpose is to inform future learning goals for the learner. You must ensure that feedback is part of the process and that feedback points the learner towards improving and developing future work.

The following section is entitled “feedback”, but could equally be described as “**feed-forward**” as it informs future practice.

Feedback

Feedback for Learning: Making it Work

Giving Feedback on Summative Assessment Decisions

Armitage et al (2003) suggests that many tutors find giving feedback to learners one of the most difficult aspects of reviewing the learning process. Ensuring that you are constructive whilst at the same time showing an accurate reflection of what has actually been achieved is a skill that can take a lot of practice.

Whilst the summative assessment decision needs to be clear in terms of the feedback (ie Did they pass/ not achieve/ what grade did they get?), the more important dimension of feedback is arguably the formative side which allows the learner to set their future learning goals.



Activity 9: Critical Reflection on receiving feedback

Place yourself “in the shoes of the learner” again.

1. Can you remember a particular tutor during your learning career that appeared to be always very critical of your work? Before you received their feedback, what were you expecting and how did you feel about it?
2. Can you remember a tutor who you felt gave ineffective feedback? Why was it ineffective?
3. Can you remember a tutor that you felt gave good, well-balanced feedback? Why was it good?

You may have come up with some different notions about what you, as a learner, expected out of feedback. Here are some of my thoughts:

- When we expect criticism we often go looking for it, home in on it and it can engender damaging feelings of negativity. This is what we should aim to avoid when giving feedback.
- Feedback is ineffective when it limits itself to words such as “good”, “excellent”, “poor” or “nonsense” without giving the learner any idea of what made it that way. It is also ineffective if the only thing that it identifies is the grade that you attained!
- Feedback is good when it identifies things that we have done well, gives some developmental points and clearly identifies where we need to go next whilst identifying (where applicable) the summative result of an assessment.

Race (2005) also suggests that we should learn to use different forms of formative feedback; in doing so, we are more likely to ensure that learners receive at least some feedback in a form that suits their own personal approach to learning.



Activity 10: Different methods of giving feedback

Read Chapter 5, “Learning through Feedback” pages 95-112 of Race (2005), “Make Learning Happen”. Alternatively you might want to read Race’s chapter on “Using feedback to help students to learn” by accessing the following website http://phil-race.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Using_feedback.pdf

For each of the suggested “12 ways forward” (pages 110-112) of this chapter, try to consider how you can improve your use of feedback in your own context. The answers that you come up with may be helpful for you when it comes to completing the Summative Assessment for this Unit on giving written and oral feedback (Outcome 2).

Using Feedback to make learning happen	How I could do this in my own context?
Help learners to want feedback	
Get the timing of your feedback right	
Make your feedback interesting	
Give at least some feedback straight away	
Make use of ICT in giving feedback	
Link feedback directly to the achievement of intended learning outcomes	

Provide most feedback at the beginning	
Use feedback to let learners know what style of work is expected of them	
Use feedback to help learners learn how best to use different kinds of source material	
Take care with the important words	
Where possible, use feedback in “rehearsal” contexts	
Get learners giving feedback, not just receiving it	

Recording and Reporting on Summative Assessment Processes

The documentation used to record and report on the achievement of a single assessment will obviously vary greatly depending on the type of assessment being undertaken. It may be informed by awarding body requirements or there may be an institutional proforma that is used.

Recording overall summative assessment results for a programme should follow your organisation's normal recording procedures. We have an obligation to learners to ensure that this is done accurately, clearly and in good time. In many institutions this will be managed centrally in an electronic format but it is important to remember that management information systems are only as good as the information that is fed into them!

You also have a professional obligation to ensure that any reports that are required by other stakeholders (such as employers, schools, funding bodies) are completed.



Activity 11: Recording and reporting of assessment decisions

Note below the procedures for recording and reporting assessment achievement and summative results that your institution uses.

Question	Your thoughts/comments/ideas from others
What procedures are used to record assessment decisions?	
What recording procedures work well?	
What are the issues that exist with recording procedures?	
What different ways exist to check the summative results for administrative errors?	

Whatever methods of assessment recording that your institution utilises, it is very important that the system has ways of ensuring the accuracy of the results. This is likely to involve a manual checking procedure and may be part of your College's internal verification procedures.

It is also important that you are aware of the possible problems that can arise through using a particular recording system and that you take care to minimise the risk of any mistakes in recording.

Activity Solutions

Activity 3

Assessment related term	Definition
internal assessment	This is where delivery staff in a college or training organisation are responsible for assessing candidates. The assessment may have been created at the college or it may be one provided by the awarding body (the latter is often referred to as a “NAB”, standing for National Assessment Bank material)
multiple-choice exercise (can be a useful “inclusive” instrument of assessment as learners with writing difficulties have little writing to do)	An exercise where the learner is asked to choose a correct answer from a selection
restricted response paper	A question paper where the candidate is expected to produce short answers of only a few words.
“open book”. This is a condition of assessment	Assessment conditions where the learner is allowed access to some other resources such as books or notes. What the candidate can have access to during the test should be decided on a centre-wide basis.

<p>personal log</p>	<p>A log or journal of activities carried out by the learner often used to authenticate evidence produced in work-based vocational qualifications (such as SVQs)</p>
<p>witness testimony</p>	<p>Witness testimony is a form of evidence most often used in vocational qualifications (such as SVQs). The witness testimony can be used, for example, to authenticate product evidence (eg a painting produced in a portfolio) or a personal statement from the candidate.</p>
<p>peer evaluation or peer assessment</p>	<p>Assessment carried out by fellow learners in the learning group</p>
<p>simulation</p>	<p>This is a form of assessment occasionally used in vocational qualifications but it is advised that it is avoided wherever possible (and in some circumstances is not acceptable as a form of assessment). An example would be a role play exercise to demonstrate the ability of the candidate to deal with an angry customer.</p>
<p>written evidence</p>	<p>Written evidence comes in many forms. Where a Unit descriptor asks for written evidence, the assessment instrument must follow this requirement otherwise it cannot be deemed fit for purpose.</p>

appropriate instrument of assessment	The instrument of assessment is the tool (e.g. question paper, practical task) used to measure the learning outcome that is being assessed. An appropriate instrument of assessment is one that does actually measure the learning outcome eg where the learning outcome is practical, a knowledge test would not be appropriate.
performance evidence	Performance evidence would require the candidate to demonstrate the ability to carry out the tasks of the learning outcome. The tasks are likely to be practical in nature and the assessor is likely to mark the performance against criteria using an observation checklist.
oral evidence	Oral evidence means that the candidate is required to demonstrate their knowledge to the assessor through speech. It is very important that the assessor records makes a record discussion.
assessment strategy	This is a set of conditions under which different assessments need to occur according to a standard setting body (normally a Sector Skills Council) that has identified a national set of standards for that particular work-based qualification. The strategy may mean that some of the qualification has to be “independently assessed” ie by somebody not involved in the delivery of the qualification.
assignment	This is a project, case study, report etc. that a candidate is asked to do outwith the classroom (ie not under test conditions). It is important with assignments that we examine the work carefully for authenticity (ie it is definitely the work of the candidate and not someone else's).

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Appendix B

Vocational Qualification Assessment Plan Exemplar

Units: AC2.3 Ensure Your Own Actions Reduce Risks to Health and Safety							
Elements: AC2.3.1 Identify the hazards and evaluate the risks in your workplace							
Activities	PCs	Method of assessment/sources of evidence	Date of assessment	Evidence already available	Links to other units (PCs and range)		
Oral questioning and examination of company policies	1	correctly name and locate the persons responsible for health and safety in the workplace	Questioning and company policies	25/6/2009	Company policies		
	2	identify which workplace policies are relevant to your working practices	Questioning and company policies		Knowledge of policies, risks and procedures		
	3	identify those working practices in any part of your job role which could harm yourself or other persons	Questioning and company policies				AC2.3.2
	4	identify those aspects of the workplace which could harm yourself or other persons	Questioning and company policies		Evaluation of risks		AC2.3.2
	5	evaluate which of the potentially harmful working practices and the potentially harmful aspects of the workplace are those with the highest risk to you or to others	Questioning and company policies				AC2.3.2

Simulation of hazard situation	6 report those hazards which present a high risk to the persons responsible for health and safety in the workplace 7 deal with hazards with low risks in accordance with workplace policies and legal requirements	Questioning and evidence of reporting Observation and questioning			AC2.3.2
Questioning for knowledge and understanding not apparent from performance to be identified from 2nd review					

Assessor's signature: _____ **1st review due:** _____

Candidate's signature: _____ **2nd review due:** _____

Date of agreement: _____ **Date of completion:** _____

Appendix C

Sample Lesson Plan

Lesson: Assessment planning – Outcome 3, develop an assessment plan

Aim: To identify the purpose and nature of different assessment strategies and recognise what must be included in an assessment plan and be able to prepare an assessment plan for one learning outcome.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this session participants will be able to:

- identify 8 main assessment strategies, stating the key characteristics for each one
- explain what an effective assessment plan should include
- prepare an assessment plan to cover one learning outcome

Time	Topic	Activity (including Assessment)	Resources (including ICT)
10 min	Re-cap on the stages of the assessment process Objectives of today's lesson	10 true/false questions – learners answer then mark each others; answers Learners will read and take notes	Questions sheets Data projector PowerPoint slides
30 min	Purpose and nature of different assessment strategies	Lecture then learners to complete worksheet	Worksheets Handouts on strategies
30 min	Purpose and features of assessment plans	Group exercise. Brainstorming on purpose and features of assessment planning	Flipchart stand, flipchart paper, marker pens, blue-tack
10 min	Different types of assessment plans	Discussion in groups – compare and contrast advantages and disadvantages of each one	4 different types of assessment plans
10 min	What must be included in assessment plans	Lecture. Learners listen and take notes	PowerPoint slides
20 min	Game – 'name the assessment strategy'	Game – divide into 4 groups, each to read out characteristics of 2 strategies to each other. Groups to guess	Task sheets
10 min	Assignment for learners to develop an assessment plan	Give out assignment. Discuss, read and ask questions	Written assignments

Required Preparation: Produce and photocopy question sheets, worksheets, handouts, assignments. Prepare PowerPoint slides. Book room, data projector and flipchart. Organise box with flipchart paper, marker pens and blue-tack.

Description of Learning Environment: Classroom with tables set out in groups of 4. Whiteboard and flipchart at front.

Health and Safety Requirements: Check there are no trailing cables from data projector. Check learners do not leave bags on floor causing trip hazards.

Core skills met: Communication skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), working with others, problem solving