

Assessment and Feedback

This document brings together a summary of the discussion outcomes from the session on Assessment and feedback, led by Anne Tierney at the event 'Teaching in the Biosciences: an Introduction for Postgraduates and Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows'.

Assessment and feedback: What? Who? Why? When? How?

What?

Knowledge
Understanding
Curriculum and extra reading
Objectives
Pass rates

Who?

Teacher / lecturer
Demonstrator
Peers
Self
Technicians / research staff
External examiners
Visiting lecturers

Why?

To see the progress of students
To evaluate yourself
Formal – necessity
For feedback
To check the progress / understanding of students and teaching
Evaluate students' ability to learn / learning capability
Sets a threshold for the course
Identify difficult areas

How?

Formal, e.g.
MCQ test
Poster
PowerPoint
Practical
Essay
Lab report
Thesis
OSCEs
Project
Literature review
Critique
Informal e.g.
One-to-one chats
Groups – how well they work together
Contributions to group work and practicals

Purposes of assessment/feedback

- Let students know what they are doing that is good/bad
- To help students improve
- To encourage students to learn
- To reinforce teaching goals – use rubrics and refer to intended learning outcomes
- Recognition – one to one feedback for students
- To encourage better feedback from students

Designing assessment and feedback for different types of course

1. A one-semester first year biology course with 500 students, some of whom have no previous experience of biology
2. A one-semester second year practical microbiology course
3. A third year zoology weekend residential field course
4. A final year biochemistry honours project
5. A final year six week industrial work placement

1. A one-semester first year biology course with 500 students, some of whom have no previous experience of biology

Short lab report

MCQ exams with feedback

Mid-term exam would consist of MCQs and short answer questions. Provide feedback via model answers for MCQs and specific feedback for short answer questions. Balance amount of feedback with time available.

2. A one-semester second year practical microbiology course

Test online via an online resource

Students work in small groups

Self-evaluate in own time

3. A third year zoology weekend residential field course

Project/grant proposal

- Use weekend to collect preliminary data
- Steps justified by evidence from field/research
- Peer- assessed
- Given feedback on why research proposal would /would not be funded.

4. A final year biochemistry honours project

Summary report

Weekly meetings

Seminar

Viva

Feedback form

Terminal feedback

Assessed on execution of scientific process rather than the results (process not content)

5. A final year six week industrial work placement

Literature review – define the scope of their project – what’s already been done and where their work will fit in

Feedback from supervisor/industry – assess skills

Project report and presentation of their data – student given feedback on presentation (this could be from peers)

Future work – review how far they got with their project/research question and suggest future work