

Assessment Audit Tool

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

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

However an Audit also serves broader purposes:

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

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

The Assessment Audit Tool can be downloaded from the Centre for Bioscience website:

www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/audit.aspx

The audit can be changed to suit your requirements. All we ask is that you clearly acknowledge The Centre for Bioscience as the originator. We would appreciate it if you would let us know that you are using the audit tool and the nature of any changes you have made as a result of your analysis. Other audits are available from our website

How to use the Assessment Audit Tool

The audit should be carried out with respect to the totality of provision within a course. The numeric scoring system allows for the situation where an issue might be addressed but only superficially or at the wrong time. Only score 4 if you believe the course optimally deals with the audit point.

In the various aspects of assessments score (0-4) for **each** of the audit points depending on how closely you believe these audit points are **optimally** achieved in the course being audited.

Score 0 if the audit point has not been seriously considered at all.

Score 1-4 if the audit point has been considered but reflection indicates that it is poorly (1), partially (2), adequately (3) or optimally (4) satisfied. Make a subjective judgement and score accordingly. Think about it from the student's point of view as well as that of the course team.

Having completed the assessment audit you should analyse each of the audit points with a score of 2 or less:

- i) What possible options could be envisaged which would satisfy the audit point?
- ii) Do resource or other constraints make any of these options unrealistic?
- iii) At what point in the course could appropriate changes be made?
- iv) Which changes would most benefit employability aspects of the course?
- v) Can a realistic action plan be formulated to introduce these changes into the course before the next intake of students?

Are there potential **quick wins**? There may be something that you or your colleagues could do very easily that would not cost a lot in terms of resources or time.

Are there changes that require **longer term planning**? Does the change require agreement of others/resource allocation/time to implement?

Collect all your action points into the **action plan** at the back of the audit.

Having instituted changes as a result of the audit the process should be repeated in 12-24 months.

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

	Score
Are the learning objectives (i.e. the changes in the student's knowledge, skills and attitudes) explicit for the module and for each constituent element piece of work where appropriate?	
Are the different types of element in the Learning Objectives reflected in the assessment? (e.g. knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes etc)	
In setting the Learning Objectives is consideration given to the learning objectives in other concurrent or previous modules?	
Is the different achievement in each Learning Objective separately identifiable by the student in the overall assessment?	
Are assessment methods/conditions adjusted appropriately for disabled students?	
Do students experience the method of assessment before it is used summatively? Either in this module or in a previous module?	
A single type of assessment (e.g. all MCQs) may disadvantage some students. Are a variety of assessment methods used in different circumstances? [For example knowledge can be assessed using MCQ, EMQ, SAQ, essays marked for factual content etc. To what extent are different assessment techniques use to give the student a variety of ways in which to demonstrate their abilities?]	

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

	Score
To what extent are the methods subjective?	
Are assessments made from written and agreed marking schemes?	
If multiple markers are used is uniformity of marking tested and, if necessary, compensated for?	
If double marked is there a mechanism other than taking the average to resolve significant differences?	
Is marking done anonymously [If machine marked score 4]	

2. The assessment methods used - are they known to provide a secure assessment appropriate to the teaching style? (cont.)

Are the assessment methods appropriate to the teaching style used? [e.g. if the course is primarily taught using problem-based-learning it would be Inappropriate for the assessment to be wholly based on MCQ designed to test factual knowledge].	
Are known mark sets included in the mark spread sheets to demonstrate accuracy of mathematical processing/combining of marks?	
Is there external input into the assessment process?	

3. Is the assessment set-up to reduce plagiarism?

	Score
Are the students clear as to what would be deemed to constitute plagiarism?	
Are students aware of the penalties, if they are caught plagiarising work?	
Have assessments been designed to reduce plagiarism by:	-----
Changing the assessment from year to year?	
Requesting evidence of how students completed coursework (e.g. by collecting plans, drafts, field or lab notes).	
Setting work that could not easily be copied from the internet or books, either because of the format requested (e.g. poster/oral presentation rather than essay) or by asking for a critique of set texts rather than just describing a theory?	

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

	Score
Are there grade descriptors available to the students?	
Are these known to and followed by the staff doing the marking?	
Are there exemplar answers?	
Are exemplar answers available at different grades?	
Are the grade descriptors congruent with those on other modules taken by the students?	

5. How is pass mark decided? Peer or criterion referenced? [Peer referenced is defined as the pass mark/grade boundaries being defined in the light of the actual achievement of the student body as a whole. Criterion referenced is where these are decided independently of the actual achievement of the student body.] If peer referenced deduct 1 from each score.

	Score
Is the mark distribution for each piece of work known and considered?	
Is the distribution of marks in the module compared with that of previous years cohorts?	
Is data available and used to compare the distribution of marks of a student cohort in this module with that in other concurrent modules?	
Is there external moderation of the marks?	
If peer referenced: are the grade boundaries set by a standard method across different modules? If Criterion referenced: does more than one person determine and agree the grade boundaries?	

6. Is assessment timely and progressive throughout the course?

	Score
Does assessment provide a monitor of student performance throughout the module?	
Is there time to allow students to respond to a poor assessment before the end of the module?	
Is assessment timely with regard to:	-----
The speed with which the results are available to the students?	
In relation to other assessed work on the module? [So students know the results and have had feedback before the next piece of assessed work?]	
In relation to other assessment on other modules? [So the totality of the assessment as experienced by the students is reasonably distributed and does not all take place in an unreasonably short period.]	
In relation to other commitments staff may have? [so they are not overloaded with marking]	

7. Is feedback ...

	Score
Provided for all assessments mid-course?	
Provided for the end of module assessment?	
Provided to all students?	
Sufficiently detailed to enable students to identify particular weaknesses?	
With omissions as well as errors?	
Do you know that all students access the feedback provided?	
Are students performing poorly counselled on a one-one basis?	
Does counselling take into account performance on other modules?	

8. Are resit/second chance arrangements known to students?

	Score
Are these arrangements written, available to students and explicit with regard to format and material covered?	
Is the date/time of any resit exams known to the students at least 3 months before it takes place?	
Are the Learning Objectives the same?	
Are resit candidates given effective feedback on their first performance?	

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

	Score
Are students' views on the assessment processes known and elicited each year?	
Is this data obtained from all students other than those absent due to illness?	
Are students treated as a homogeneous group (score 1) or are their views fragmented into those of the various sub-groups making up the student body? (score 4) [e.g. year 1 and year 2 taking the same module? Students on different courses but taking the same module? If the students are a homogeneous group (i.e. all taking the same courses/modules) score 4.]	

The following aspect is calculated but not scored

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

	Hours
a). Total hours spent by teachers (including demonstrators, PG tutors etc) on assessment in this module. This includes time spent setting assessments, marking student work, compiling and processing assessment data, marking lab/project work (include that proportion of time spent in labs which is actually involved in assessing the performance of the student at the bench if this is done).	
b). Total hours of teaching time spent by staff in direct contact with students. This is usually time-tabled time for teachers (of all levels) to be in contact with students. If students are taught for 1 hour in, say, 5 small groups, then 5 hours of teacher time would be involved. Do NOT include preparation time or time spent on assessment of students.	
c). Total hours spent by a student in being assessed. Include examination and viva time, time spent actually writing assessed course work (e.g. essays, practical write-ups etc) but not the time spent preparing the material. Estimate where necessary. Assume course work takes 0.5hr to write 1 page.	
d). Total hours for which a student is involved in any form of teaching/learning/assessment activity (lectures + practicals + self-directed + directed + tutorials + others etc) on this module. This is the total hours you would expect this module and the work associated with it to occupy the student. Estimate where necessary.	
e). How proportional is the staff time spent in assessment to the marks awarded? How proportional is the student time spent in completing the work for an assessment to the marks awarded? [For each assessed item consider the proportionality between the fraction of the total marks awarded and the assessment time devoted to it. Consider this for both the staff and the students. This item is not represented numerically but you should note areas where the time spent by staff in completing the assessment is very large compared with the proportion of marks given for the work]	-----

Action Plan

Make a note of the resources you will need and whose help will be required.

1.

2.

3.

4.