

## Assessment audit tool (February 2003)

### Aims of an Audit

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 can be developed in relation to a particular discipline;
- identify how far and in what area development should take place;
- give recognition to existing activity which contributes effectively.

However an Audit also serves broader purposes:

- raising awareness by staff of practice in general and of the institution's plans;
- 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 module. It is designed to help teachers **consider** the assessment processes in their module in order to **identify areas** where assessment could be **improved**.

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

Having done this carry out the audit below with respect to the totality of assessment. The numeric scoring system allows for the situation where, say, against a criterion of 'is marking anonymous?' some (e.g. essays written under exam conditions) meet the criterion and some (e.g. assessed practical write-ups) do not since a score of 1-4 could be recorded depending on the extent of compliance.

*In the 8 aspects of assessment score (0-4) for **EACH** of the approximately 45 INDIVIDUAL characteristics of good assessment depending on how closely you believe these characteristics are achieved in the module being audited.*

*Score 0 if the characteristic has not been seriously considered at all.*

*Score 1-4 if the characteristic has been considered but reflection indicates that it is poorly (1), marginally (2), adequately (3) or completely (4) satisfied. Make a subjective judgement and score accordingly. Note that students can be over as well as under assessed and that assessment can occupy excessive amounts of staff time.*

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

	<i>Score</i>
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. <i>knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes etc</i> )	
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 Objectives <b>separately</b> 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? <i>Either in this module or in a previous module?</i>	
A single type of assessment (e.g. all MCQs) may disadvantage some students. Is there a variety of assessment methods used in different circumstances? [ <i>For example knowledge can be assessed using MCQ, EMQ, SAQ, essays marked for factual content etc. To what extent are different assessment techniques used to give the student a variety of ways in which to demonstrate their abilities?</i> ]	
Section score	

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

	<i>Score</i>
To what extent are the methods objective?	
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?	

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

Is marking done anonymously [ <i>If machine marked score 4</i> ]	
Are the assessment methods appropriate to the teaching style used? <i>[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].</i>	
Are the students clear as to what would be deemed to constitute plagiarism and has assessment been designed to discourage/prevent plagiarism?	
Are known mark sets included in the mark spread sheets to demonstrate accuracy of mathematical processing/combining of marks?	
Is there <b>external</b> input into the assessment process?	
Section score	

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

	<i>Score</i>
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?	
Section score	

**4. How is pass mark decided?** Peer or criterion referenced? *[Peer referenced is here 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 divide score for this complete aspect by 2.

	<i>Score</i>
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?	
Section score	

**5. Is assessment timely and progressive throughout the course?**

	<i>Score</i>
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? <i>[So students know the results and have had feedback before the next piece of assessed work?]</i>	
in relation to other assessment on other modules? <i>[So the totality of the assessment as experienced by the students is reasonably distributed and does not all take place in an unreasonably short period.]</i>	
Section score	

**6. Is feedback provided?**

	<i>Score</i>
On all in course assessments?	
On the end of module assessment?	
To all students?	
As written comments sufficiently detailed to enable the student to identify particular weaknesses?	
With omissions as well as errors?	
How do you know that all students access the feedback provided?	
Are students performing poorly counseled (on a one-one basis)?	
Does counseling take into account performance on other modules?	
Section score	

**7. Are resit/second chance arrangements known to students?**

	<i>Score</i>
Are these arrangements written, available to the 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 performance in the first sit?	
Section score	

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

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

THIS ASPECT IS CALCULATED BUT NOT SCORED  
**Proportion of total teaching time allocated to assessment.**

	<i>Figure</i>
a) Hours spent by teachers (including demonstrators PG tutors etc) on assessment	
b) Hours of direct teacher contact with students	
c) Hours spent by student being assessed	
d) Total each student involved in teaching/learning (lectures + practicals + self-directed + directed + tutorials others etc)	
e) How efficient is the assessment process? <i>[For each assessed item consider the proportionality between the fraction of the total marks awarded and the assessment time devoted to it. This item is not represented numerically but you should note areas where the time spent by staff in completing the assessment is very large compared with the proportion of marks given for the work]</i>	

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