**A checklist of eight steps necessary for good assessment and feedback practice**

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When developing or redesigning programmes, what you decide on assessment and feedback has significant impact on students’ development and achievement, as well as their satisfaction levels. What is offered here is a checklist of the most important stages that need to be gone through to achieve good assessment and feedback practice.

**1. To what extent are you** **abiding by the rules**? Before you start on assessment design, have you consulted your professional, regulatory and subject-body requirements for assessment and feedback in your subject area? Have you looked at the QAA Code of Practice B6 to ensure you comply with national guidelines on assessment and feedback? How well do you use LJMU guidance on assessment and feedback? Do you and all your assessors on your programme use the whole range of marks as set out in the 2017 LJMU guidance on Grade descriptors? Do you meet LJMU expectations about returning work with feedback within the mandated time of fifteen working days?

**2.** **Are your assessed tasks meaningfully and fully aligned** with what you have said in your curriculum documentation about what students will be able to know and do by the end of the programme? Do the verbs in your learning outcomes translate into the tasks you ask students to do in their assignments? Are these verbs actually the right ones in terms of level and challenge to students?

**3.** At the outset, are you clear about the five core questions of **fit-for-purpose assessment**, that is:

* **Why are you assessing?** What are your specific purposes for assessing at this time? Is this a formative task that you are giving students very early in the first year of their programme to help them show what they can do and to help build confidence, or is it a summative end-of-programme task to judge whether the student is fit enter practice in a professional environment? The actual assignment will look rather different for these two purposes.
* **What is it you are actually assessing?** Is it product or process, theory or practice or a combination of both? Are you assessing what is easy and manageable to assess or are you assessing authentically what the learning outcomes promise you will?
* **How are you assessing?** What methods and approaches are you using? If it is a final summative assignment, then methods like unseen time constrained exams with low or no feedback components may be sensible, whereas if you are helping students get the measure of their own achievement, then getting them using good quality multiple choice computer-assessed tests might fit the bill if both right and wrong answers trigger helpful feedback. For new students an annotated bibliography, where students explain how they sourced references and how easy they found it to locate useful materials might be much more useful than a standard essay. Is there sufficient diversity in assessment methods and approaches?
* **Who is best placed to assess?** To what extent should all assignments be tutor assessed? How much can you involve students in their own and each other’s assessment, which is known to have beneficial effects on students’ self-knowledge? If you want authentic assessment activity, to what extent can you involve practice tutors, placement supervisors, line managers and employers for out-of-classroom and in-classroom assignments? How best can you involve service-users and clients in students’ assessment? And in these cases, how can you ensure that everyone is marking consistently and to agreed standards?
* **When should you assess?** Even when you are committed to only one substantive assessment within a module, how can you avoid the ‘wet ink’ syndrome where students adopt high risk behavior and leave everything to the last minute? How can you build in formal or informal checkpoints or incremental opportunities to help students check they are working on the right lines? Is there enough time between when you give feedback on one assignment for your advice to impact on what they do in the next assignment?

**4.**  **To what extent is your assessment *for* rather than just *of* learning?** Are the assignments a means by which students actively learn, or are they seen as just something that happens at the end of the learning process? Are they sufficiently challenging, demanding higher order learning and integration of knowledge learned in both the university and other contexts? To what extent do tasks encourage metacognition, promoting thinking about the learning process, not just the learning outcomes? Are students involved in self-assessment? Do you provide students with opportunities for dialogue about their work?

**5.**  **How do you assure standards** so you can be confident your assessment is reliable, valid, equitable and fair? Do you offer training/CPD for staff new to assessment in how to assess? How do you ensure good reliability between assessors? Do you use moderation productively and formatively? How do you deal with wide divergences in marks between assessors?

**6. Do** **your students and staff have shared understandings** of what are the purposes and processes of assessment and feedback? How do your students (and your staff team members who are new to assessing) get to become ‘assessment literate’? Do they understand how criteria link to learning outcomes and how important it is to work closely with them? Do they recognise how weightings indicate the importance you place on particular criteria? (and are your weightings the right ones?).

**7.**  **Is the feedback you give transformative and developmental?**

* How does the guidance you give actually change students’ behaviour, for example in terms of improving their referencing or helping them to be more critically analytical?
* Is the amount of feedback you give sufficient to genuinely help them improve?
* Is the language you use in feedback helpful? Does the vocabulary you use help students to move beyond their current achievements, whatever their level?
* Do you guide them about where to gain help on areas they find confusing and puzzling, for example to programme resources or web links that help them improve their information literacy or their understanding of what comprises good academic conduct/plagiarism?

**8. To what extent are you** **involving students** in designing and using good assessment and feedback development? How much are you using student comments from one year about assessment and feedback to improve your practice next time? Do student reps have opportunities to comment on the design of assessment tasks and assignments for future years?

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