UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Guide

Assessment Toolkit

Contents

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Claire Gordon, Jane Hughes and Colleen McKenna, September 2015

How to use the toolkit

Assessment influences what students learn, the way they approach their learning and their attitudes towards learning and their course. Well-designed assessment tasks can also help prepare students for future employment or further study and provide employers with evidence of their achievement.

This toolkit has been designed to support the review and redesign of existing programmes and courses as well as the development of new ones for the University of London International Programmes. It is divided into a number of sections which give both general guidance on assessment, feedback and marking as well as providing detailed descriptions and discussions of a range of methods. One method that is not discussed here is the closed-book exam. Though these remain a prominent element of course assessment on the International Programmes, the remit for this work was to examine methods other than closed-book examinations. Future work could explore innovative approaches to summative examinations. In addition, the toolkit could be digitised to enhance its functionality and to enable it to exist as a dynamic multi-modal developmental resource with a set of accompanying student-focused materials fit for the 21st century global student.

Each section is designed to be standalone but equally sections can be used in combination. Our aim has been to offer outlines of different methods of assessment, highlight their strengths and challenges and propose some questions for programme directors and course convenors to consider when designing and implementing these new methods. The toolkit has been written with an awareness of the variety and breadth of the International Programmes as well as its highly diverse student body who undertake programmes individually and in formal institutional settings.

Designing assessment

Fundamentally, assessment is an integral part of the learning process. Effective assessment design should thus enable students to work towards and successfully achieve individual course's intended learning outcomes, in terms of disciplinary knowledge, skills and attitudes as well as a broader range of transferable skills and employability attributes. At the same time the contexts in which teaching and learning takes place also need to be taken into account. This is particularly important in the case of International Programmes distance and flexible learning programmes delivered across the world to both individual learners and in institutional settings with cohorts that range from several hundred to many thousand students at a range of different levels. This introduction outlines key principles that should inform the design of university assessment, in order to support the review and design of assessment in the International Programmes.

Assessment is for learning

Use both formative and summative assessment

When identifying the main purpose of an assessment activity, it is common to distinguish between formative and summative assessment.

Formative assessment is intended mainly to provide students with feedback from which they can learn and which will help them improve their future performance. One example is an assignment which is marked and returned to the student with comments but does not count towards the final mark for the course. Students are expected to learn from doing the work and from the feedback, and to apply their learning in future assessed work. Formative assessment tasks can help students gain a sense of progression and prepare them for summative assessment.

Summative assessment is intended mainly to identify and measure a student's achievement. End of course examinations are examples of summative assessment but on some courses students carry out summative assessments at different points in the duration of a course and this may be particularly relevant in distance learning settings. Students receive a grade or mark for summative assessments but in some instances such as in exams they may not receive feedback. The results may be used by people outside the course such as employers, for selection, and in course evaluation and audit processes.

It is increasingly common for assessments to have both a formative and a summative purpose so that the students have the chance to practice and develop their learning over time in preparation for summative work. Effective course design should include both formative and summative assessment opportunities

Two International Programmes examples of combining formative and summative assessment:

- MRes/PGDip/PGCert in Educational and Social Research. From 2015–16, each module will be formally assessed by an extended piece of coursework. Students will receive formative feedback on the first draft of each coursework assignment and will be able to respond to that feedback before final submission. They will also receive summative feedback with their final grade/mark.
- In the International Programmes' MSc/PGDip/PGCert in Livestock Health and Production up to 3 tutor-marked assessments (TMA) may be assessed for each module. These TMAs act both as formative and summative assessments. Each TMA is marked and returned to the student to help the student understand how well they are doing and learn how to improve. The highest mark gained counts towards the formal coursework assessment element for the modules.

Assessment should be valid, reliable, fair, accessible, inclusive

- A **valid** assessment allows students to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes that are being assessed and enables their performance in relation to these outcomes to be evaluated. In other words, it is appropriate for the intended purpose. An essay, for example, might be a valid way to assess the ability to develop an argument but not to assess design or performance skills. A journal might be a valid way to assess reflection. Table 1 matches types of learning outcomes to possible assessment methods.
- **Reliable** assessment generates results that are accurate and consistent across a cohort and over time. This is not only important administratively but also to ensure students' trust in the assessment process. Marking schemes and moderation arrangements are key to maximising reliability (see *Marking and Feedback*). Reliability is also affected by the suitability of the assessment to the students, the wording of questions and the preparedness of students for the assessment.
- **Fair** assessments give all students a reasonable chance of succeeding. Students should be adequately prepared for both the content and the method of assessment and they should know what level of achievement is expected. All students should have had the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills being assessed. Marking processes and criteria should be communicated to the students and markers should be adequately prepared.

- Students' needs are highly diverse and every effort should be made to ensure that assessment is **accessible** to all. Ensuring accessibility is important in all aspects of the course, not only in assessment. It means working within institutional and legal guidelines on equal opportunities or disability, including providing support or alternative modes of assessment where necessary. The International Programmes Inclusive Practice Policy is available here: londoninternational.ac.uk/sar
- In distance education there may be inequalities that are not present in campus-based courses. If students have unequal access to technologies or the internet in private study time, course convenors may need to offer a choice of technology or a 'low-tech' alternative task. Giving all students access to a VLE/LMS such as *Moodle* or *Blackboard* will help, provided that only the tools that are included in this VLE/LMS are used. This set of JISC guides offers guidance on assessment and accessibility.[1]
- Students with different cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds may have different expectations and prior experience of assessment. These can affect their orientation to assessment, raise concerns and affect performance. A programme that uses a combination of different assessment methods is likely to be more inclusive than one that relies on a single type of task. Some institutions actually offer students a choice of assessment methods. An example of this is the University College Dublin choice of assessment project.[2] Additional benefits of a diversified assessment programme are outlined below.

Diversifying assessment

Effective assessment practice operates at a number of different levels. Course and/or programme assessments need to reflect a wide range of intended disciplinary and academic learning outcomes. It may also be appropriate to assess attributes valued by potential employers and professional bodies, such as the ability to present ideas orally, work in a team, communicate and collaborate online or to use specific 'tools of the trade'.

International Programmes Health Sciences courses award 5% of the marks for 'group work'.

The need to accommodate student diversity in relation to culture, language, prior experience of assessment practices and preferred ways of learning has been noted above. A programme that uses different assessment tasks and methods is more likely to allow a diverse group of students to demonstrate a range of achievements. (See Table 1.) One way to increase the range of activities is to incorporate varied online tasks (or e-tivities) into assessment as, for example, in the International Programmes MA in Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies. Staff and resources

In the International Programmes MA in Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies from 2015–16: core and elective modules are assessed on 30% E-tivites/70% seen open-book exam. E-tivity activities vary and include essays, reviews of journal articles, project outlines and completion of a library tutorial.

The Agricultural Economics programmes at the International Programmes use a range of assessment methods in modules, as appropriate to the subject matter. This includes essay format, PowerPoint presentation, mathematical calculations and web-based discussion, or some combination of these.

1 jisc.ac.uk/guides?f%5b0%5d=field_project_topics

2 www.ucd.ie/teaching/projects/archive/choiceofassessmentmethods/

Staff and resources

Decisions about assessment methods should take into account the demands on staff time for administering and marking the assessment and any associated meetings. Changing assessment methods may also mean that staff require additional and ongoing professional development.

Table 1: Assignments mapped against learning outcomes[3]

Generic domains of learning outcomes	Suitable tasks or methods to engender learning in these domains
Thinking critically and making judgments (Developing arguments, reflecting, evaluating, assessing, judging)	Essay Report Journal Letter of advice to... Present a case for an interest group Prepare a committee briefing paper for a specific meeting Book review (or article) for a particular journal Write a newspaper article for a foreign newspaper Comment on an article's theoretical perspective
Solving problems and developing plans (Identifying problems, posing problems, defining problems, analysing data, reviewing, designing experiments, planning, applying information)	Problem scenario Group work Work-based problem Prepare a committee of enquiry report Draft a research bid to a realistic brief Analyse a case Conference paper (or notes for a conference paper plus annotated bibliography)
Performing procedures and demonstrating techniques (Computation, taking readings, using equipment, following laboratory procedures, following protocols, carrying out instructions)	Demonstration Role play Make a video (write script and produce/make a video) Produce a poster Lab report Prepare an illustrated manual on using the equipment, for a particular audience Observation of real or simulated professional practice
Managing and developing oneself (Working co-operatively, working independently, learning independently, being self-directed, managing time, managing tasks, organising)	Journal Portfolio Learning contract Group work
Accessing and managing information (Researching, investigating, interpreting, organising information, reviewing and paraphrasing information, collecting data, searching and managing information sources, observing and interpreting)	Annotated bibliography Project Dissertation Applied task Applied problem

Table 1: Assignments mapped against learning outcomes[3] (cont'd)

Generic domains of learning outcomes	Suitable tasks or methods to engender learning in these domains
Demonstrating knowledge and understanding (Recalling, describing, reporting, recounting, recognising, identifying, relating and interrelating)	Written examination Oral examination Essay Report Comment on the accuracy of a set of records Devise an encyclopaedia entry Produce an A–Z of ... Write an answer to a client's question Short answer questions: True/False/ Multiple Choice Questions (paper-based or computer-aided assessment)
Designing, creating, performing (Imagining, visualising, designing, producing, creating, innovating, performing)	Portfolio Performance Presentation Hypothetical Projects Communicating
Communicating (One and two-way communication, communication within a group, verbal, written and non-verbal communication. Arguing, describing, advocating, interviewing, negotiating, presenting, using specific written forms)	Written presentation (essay, report, reflective paper, etc.) Oral presentation Group work Discussion/debate/role play Participate in a "Court of Enquiry" Presentation to camera Observation of real or simulated professional practice

3 from Teaching @UNSW | Assessment Toolkit Aligning Assessment with Outcomes Document Version Date 07/08/2015
teaching.unsw.edu.au/aligning-assessment-learning-outcomes

(Dunn, 2010, adapted from Nightingale et al., 1996). University of New South Wales

Avoidance and detection of academic misconduct

Academic misconduct may involve plagiarism, identity fraud and other forms of misrepresentation. While certain forms of assessment may be perceived to provide opportunities for academic misconduct, a range of safeguards can be designed into the learning and assessment process to reduce the likelihood of malpractice and support student learning. In other words limiting the scope for misconduct is an integral part of the assessment design process.

Assessment by unseen written examination, for example, may be viewed as less open to misconduct than coursework. This is understandable because in this context student identity can be verified and candidates are under observation throughout. It is, however, possible to minimise and detect misconduct in other forms of assessment and coursework-based assessment is common in distance and flexible education, including International Programmes courses.[4]

> From 2016–17 assessment in the International Programmes MA in Education programme will be 100% coursework.

In addition to the general points in this section, this topic is also addressed in the sections on individual assessment methods.

Education as a means of minimising misconduct

It is critical to educate students in good academic practices and support their development by giving them repeated opportunities to practise assessment with feedback. This is particularly important in distance learning programmes with highly diverse student cohorts.

A number of different methods can be used to developing good academic habits in students:

- Detailed guidelines should be made available and explained to students at the start of any programme and/or course.
- Good practice should be modelled in any materials made available to students.
- Self-guided tutorials and quizzes can offer additional opportunities for students to develop good practice in citation and referencing. These could be standalone activities or built into the course curriculum and even serve as a mode of formative assessment.

> There is a library tutorial E-tivity in the MA in Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies

- Students could also be encouraged to use referencing tools such as Mendeley, Zotero (both free), Endnote or Reference Manager. This will help them organise their study materials and note-taking over the course of a programme. These tools are also useful for peer to peer collaborations.

4 For example, from 2016–17 assessment on the International Programmes MA in Education will be 100% coursework-based.

Design the assessment to minimise misconduct

Misconduct can also be reduced by careful attention to assessment design and also by considering the stages of assignment development as integral to the assessment itself and involving both the students and assessors.

Assessment design

- Create assessment questions/tasks which ask students to relate the topic to their own experience or to apply theory to a specific context to minimize the likelihood of students reproducing or copying existing work.
- As part of the assignment, ask students to compare/critique/rank their sources or justify their inclusion.
- Change assessment tasks/topics frequently.

The assessment process

- Ask students either in a coversheet or as part of the assignment to reflect on the process of developing the work: for example, how did they start work on the assignment? What was difficult? How did they address any difficulties? What resources did they use and why?
- If the assessment is based on a written assignment, require students to submit an outline, a bibliography and at least one draft before submitting the final version. Marks do not necessarily need to be allocated for these though this may encourage students to engage in the course more seriously from an early stage.
- If possible, ensure that the same reader reviews the entire lifecycle of an assignment (from outline through to final draft) to substantiate that the work is that of the student.

Detecting misconduct

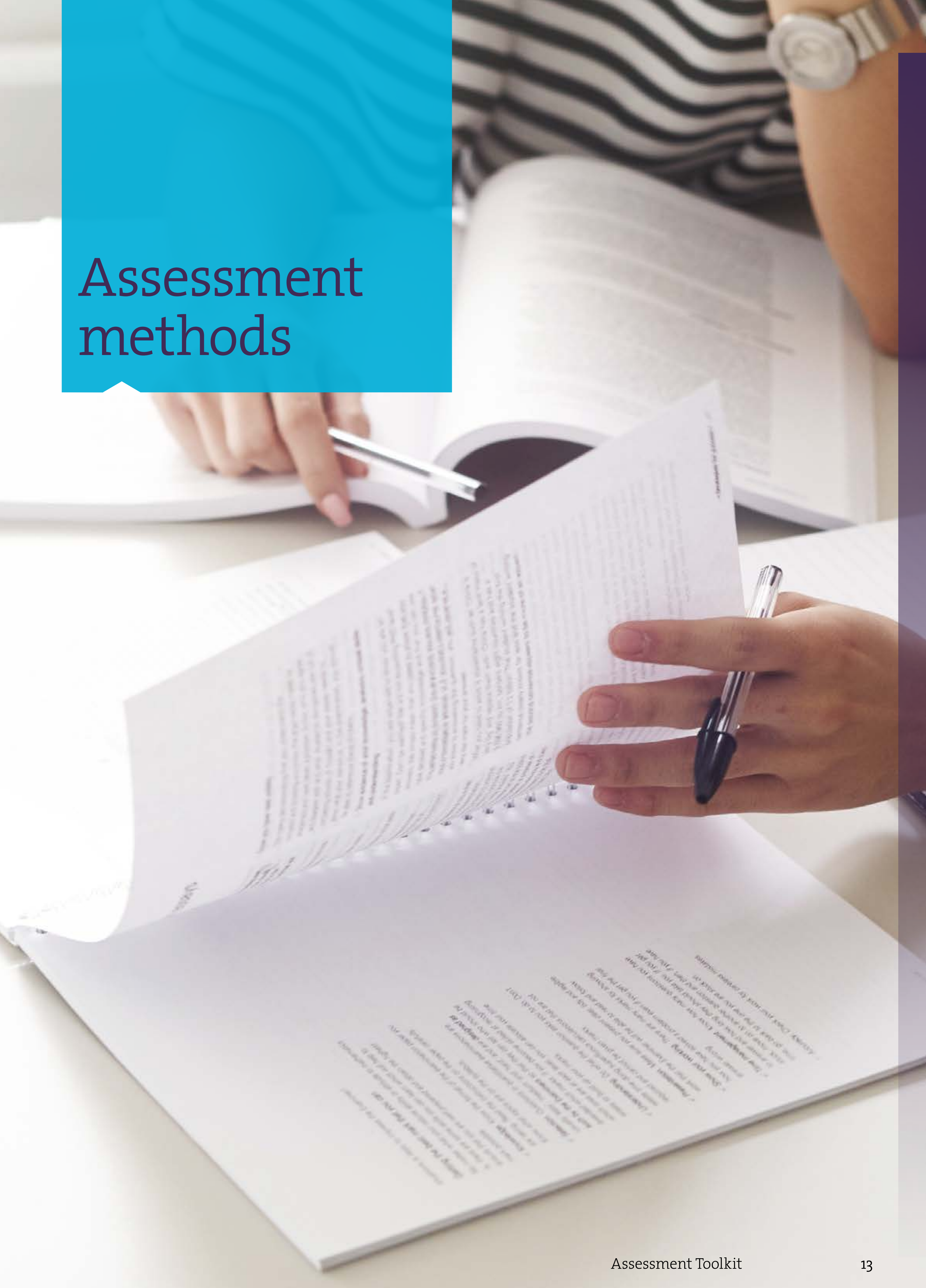
Approaches to detecting misconduct will vary according to discipline and the nature of the assessed work. Technology can help but a marker should be able to spot indications that work may not be original, for example:

- Inconsistencies in a written text:
  - Changes in style, vocabulary, accuracy of grammar or spelling are clues that material from different sources may have been inserted.
  - Changes in layout, font or spacing may suggest that text has been pasted in.
- Quotations or diagrams in the main text that are not referenced in the bibliography.

A word-processed document carries its history with it and it may be possible to see whether the text has been developed gradually or whether large quantities of text have been added in one instance, which might suggest copying and pasting.

Tools such as *Turnitin* search for similarities between documents and are frequently used to identify possible cases of plagiarism for further investigation. *Turnitin* can also be used by students to check their own assignments and this may help them to improve their academic writing. Markers may need training in how to use *Turnitin* appropriately.

Assessment methods



Annotated bibliography

Description/definition

An annotated bibliography consists of a list of resources (often texts) with a short summary and analysis of each item. Entries should contain full bibliographic details and comprise about 50 – 150 words. This assignment might stimulate a wide reading of a topic; encourage early engagement with course primary and secondary texts; and provide opportunities for short, focused critical analysis.

Affordances/strengths/challenges

This assignment foregrounds reading and writing skills as well as those of selecting and appraising scholarly sources.

The strengths of this format are that it

- can be used formatively as a lead up to a longer assignment
- requires an awareness and management of academic reading
- helps students select and engage with relevant texts in a critical manner
- requires concise summary and analysis – both of which are valuable skills
- lends itself to early formative feedback (with either a tutor or peer)
- helps both students and teachers ascertain whether the correct approach is being taken in terms of the choice of resources and the engagement with them
- offers opportunities for peer and group work (That is, peers might review others' bibliographies or small groups might work collectively to create a single annotated bibliography.)

Potential challenges are that this form of assessment is demanding – requiring students to read, summarise and critique academic resources. It is possible that students will not have encountered this method of assessment before, and therefore, they may need specific guidance in what is expected. (Exemplars may be useful for this task.)

How to design a valid and inclusive assessment of this type

A key aspect for assessment design will be making explicit what is expected of students. For example,

- Roughly how many texts should be included in the bibliography and how detailed should each entry be?
- Should students use mainly texts which are on the course reading list, or is the intention that they find additional resources?
- What types of resources should be included (peer–refereed journals, books, reports, websites, etc.)?
- Do students have access to relevant repositories?

More broadly, this assessment should be designed with the overall course assessment in mind.

Questions to consider include

- Will students build on this work in a summative written assignment, such as an essay, a review article or a dissertation?
- Will they draw on it in their examination preparation?
- Is it being used to replace another assessment form – such as an essay?
- How does it relate to future and prior work on the course?

Making clear the relationship of this assignment to other learning and assessment activities would be valuable both for the overall course plan and for students' understanding of their work.

Resources

The following are resources that explain and illustrate annotated bibliographies. They are designed to help explain the assignment format to students:

guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography

writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/annotated-bibliography

owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/

Safeguards and strategies to avoid and detect misconduct

One of the strengths of this format is that it can form part of a strategy to prevent plagiarism within a course. If students prepare an annotated bibliography before writing a longer text, such as an essay, then a tutor should be able to see the development of ideas over time.

Additionally, students could be requested to include in their submission a track changes version, so that the editing process could be seen, thus mitigating the likelihood of the cut and pasting of text from elsewhere.

This activity could be set up for students as a formative activity which, although attracting some marks, would be part of their academic development. In such a context, it would make little sense to cheat.

Approaches to marking and feedback / feedforward

An advantage of this assignment is that there are discrete components that can be reflected in the marking criteria. These might include:

- The completeness of the citations (Have they been formatted correctly?)
- The selection of the entries (Have appropriate sources been included?)
- The accuracy of the summaries (Is this a good précis of the source?)
- The quality of analysis (Has the text been critically evaluated?)

Example marking rubric:
library.njit.edu/researchhelpdesk/instruction/Annotated__Bibliography_grading_rubric.pdf

As this list demonstrates, an annotated bibliography enables tutors to offer guidance on a number of areas of academic work, ranging from reading to analysis.

Additionally, this assignment offers excellent opportunities for feedforward. Students could be given feedback on their choice of sources, the accuracy of their summary and the quality of their analysis. Peers might give each other feedback and/or tutors can provide written comments.

Blogs

Description/definition

A blog (web log) is a web page where the writer can make regular additions over a period of time, with the most recent usually displayed first. Hyperlinks, images, audio and video can be included with the text. Contributions can be added by an individual or by a group. A blog is intended to be shared with an interested audience and allows readers to comment on contributions.

Blogs are particularly suited to recording, reflecting and reviewing. A journal can be used for similar purposes but does not so easily support interaction with multiple readers or the inclusion of images or multimedia material.

Blogs have been used in both formative and summative assessment, for example:

- to record and reflect on progress in a group project
- to record and reflect on critical incidents in health education
- as a learning journal for a complete module.

Affordances/strengths

- easily shared with peers and teaching staff even if they are in different locations
- can also be read and commented on by people beyond the course, allowing engagement with/feedback from practitioners in the field and members of the public (see footnote 5)
- helps students engage with the discourse of their field
- can help students to develop their ability to communicate online and to create and manage an online identity[5]
- can provide a record of a student's development over time
- particularly supports formative feedback through 'comment' feature and gives the student an opportunity to respond to this feedback
- supports reflection
- being able to preview posts before making them 'live' can be helpful to students working in a second language
- requiring regular writing facilitates students' development as writers in their disciplines.
- students may well be familiar with blogs, as readers and/or writers
- can be multimodal and offer students an opportunity to integrate written text, image and perhaps video and audio in academic work

5 "The concept of 'digital influence' is becoming of increasing importance in differentiating between potential employees. People who can make use of online tools to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and who can leverage social media to gain recognition as innovators, thought-leaders and influencers are highly employable." JISC **jisc.ac.uk/guides/enhancing-student-employability-through-technology-supported-assessment-and-feedback Accessed 31/08/2015**

Challenges

- Blogs may be time-consuming for staff especially in the early stages.
- Students need clear guidelines and gradual induction.
- Issues related to student (and staff?) access, attitudes and prior experience of the technology:
  - Although writing in a blog is not necessarily more difficult than composing and sending an email, technology can be a barrier for some students. Some may find the technology intimidating.
  - Some may be reluctant to accept a novel form of assessment.
  - They may lack technology access in private study time.
- Interruptions of service (e.g. internet connection or chosen blog tool) could be disruptive and it is wise to prepare alternatives in advance of such an event.

How to design a valid and inclusive assessment of this type

The role of the blog in assessment will depend on the outcomes to be assessed.

- The blog may run alongside another assessment task, such as preparing a project or presentation. This can help define individual contributions to group working and provide a record of the working process.
- Another use of a blog is to require short posts on course readings or weekly topics. These would usually receive formative feedback, perhaps from peers rather than tutors.
- A blog can be used to support a work placement or study abroad. This PDF file[6] , contains the guidance given to Education students from Queen's University Belfast who were to be assessed on their blog during a placement abroad. The document also includes short grade descriptors to give an indication of the standard expected.

Other aspects to consider in relation to preparing students include

- ensuring that students understand how the blog relates to their learning on the course and the specific outcomes on which assessment will focus
- providing students with guidance about expectations, including the expected frequency of posts, an indication of length (e.g. a word limit per post), examples of posts
- sharing the marking criteria with students to help them appreciate the purpose of this method of assessment and assist them in commenting on one another's contributions
- feedback or comments on posts, particularly in the early stages of the blog.

Safeguards and strategies to avoid and detect misconduct

- Design the task to reduce the likelihood of misconduct.
- Prepare students and give them guidelines, including examples of referencing and citation in online writing.
- Reward correct linking and citing of online resources in the marking scheme.
- A blog is developed through regular posts and can therefore be monitored. Inconsistencies in language can be a clue that writing is not all original.
- As with any written work, it can be compared with other text online, either through a search engine or with a tool that searches for matching text, such as *Turnitin*.

6 stran.ac.uk/mods/int/outgoing/BlogCriteria.pdf

Approaches to marking and feedback / feedforward

- As with all forms of assessment, it is important that students understand what is being assessed and why a blog is being used – i.e. how it relates to intended learning outcomes.
- A blog lends itself to formative assessment and feedback.
- Assessment may include an element of negotiation, for instance allowing students to select a small number of their blog posts for summative assessment.
- The marking scheme can give credit for comments on other students' posts and/or for responding to comments.
- An element of peer marking could be included.
- This is an example of descriptors (rubric) for assessing blogs: teaching.unsw.edu.au/assessing-blogs#

Computer-based assessments

Description

Computer-based assessments (CBAs) may take a variety of different forms. The defining characteristic is that the computer marks or assesses the responses provided by the students. CBAs can be used as part of an online virtual learning environment or in more traditional classroom settings via mobile devices, tablets and PCs. CBAs often take the form of surveys or different types of quizzes and problems – in the latter case, depending on the software, the assessment may be set up to involve flexible learning pathways.

CBAs can be adapted to different levels of learning and used in different disciplines but they are a particularly attractive form of assessment in quantitative disciplines. CBAs can be used as a tool for assessment of, as well as for, learning.

Affordances/strengths /challenges

CBAs are highly flexible learning tools and therefore can be designed to correspond to the particular level of learning of the students, the stage they are at in the learning process, and also, in the more advanced versions, can automatically adapt to the level of the student. Depending on their design, CBAs can be used to support lower and higher levels of learning.

The strengths of the format are that it

- enables students to work at their own pace and also flexibly depending on the other demands on their time
- enables students on large courses to do homework on a weekly basis
- encourages students to work progressively to acquire key concepts/manipulations
- creates an interactive learning environment which may be particularly attractive for students on distance-learning programmes
- students get immediate feedback on their work
- improves reliability for particular kinds of assessment
- ensures impartiality
- enables the tutor to monitor the development and performance of his/her students
- enables the tutor to identify potentially challenging aspects of the learning process and provide general feedback and thus obviates the need for individual feedback
- can be adapted to test basic knowledge and practice basic skills or to more sophisticated manipulations
- can be used for formative and/or summative assessment
- enables students to revisit and revise different material including under timed constrained conditions which might help them prepare for summative assessment
- in more advanced versions can be set up so that students will be given different pathways to follow depending on their performance
- can be set up so that the tasks become progressively more difficult.

Potential challenges are that CBAs are time-consuming to design and set up. Beyond these initial sunk costs they can run on their own. Students will need careful instruction on how to make best use of CBAs.

Ensuring inclusive and effective assessment design

As in all assessments it is important for the person setting up the CBAs to be clear about what exactly is being assessed, how this aligns with learning outcomes on the course and to make explicit what is expected of the students. CBAs are an attractive form of assessment as they encourage self-assessment and learning, enable students to progress with their studies at their own pace depending on other constraints and to monitor their own progress over time.

It may be useful to bear the following in mind when designing CBAs:

- What form will the CBAs take? What are the affordances of available software packages/VLE environments?
- How much time are students expected to work on CBAs on a weekly basis?
- Is the purpose to test knowledge or to contribute to the building of knowledge through different developmental pathways?
- Will the tutor engage in the CBAs? Will it be a completely autonomous learning experience or will the tutor also send feedback and if so when, what form will it take and how often?
- Will these be formative or summative assessments or both?
- If summative marks are to be allocated, what percentage and what portion of the CBAs will be taken into account?

More broadly, this assessment should be designed with the overall course assessment in mind. Questions to consider include:

- How do CBAs enable the students to meet their intended learning outcomes?
- How do CBAs fit with the other forms of assessment on the course?

Safeguards and strategies to avoid and detect misconduct

CBAs are machine tools which automatically mark student work. In the case of summative work it may be hard to detect cheating. Students can be given a time window to complete their assessments and a password but it may be difficult to prove that the student him/herself has completed the assignment. Invigilated exam centres for summative CBAs would be one way to limit potential identity fraud and collaboration.

Approaches to marking and feedback/feedforward

The marking process is part and parcel of the assessment design as the programme has to be set up to from the outset enable automatic marking. Designers of CBAs need to think carefully about the marking process depending on the nature of the task – will it just be a right or wrong answer, will there be additional explanations and clarifications in the case of errors. Finally tutors should decide how often they will provide feedback and in what form and communicate this to students.

Essays

Description/definition

The essay is one of the most traditional forms of academic writing and assessment particularly but not exclusively in more qualitative disciplines. They may take more descriptive or analytical forms but generally involve responding to a question and in the process developing and sustaining a coherent line of argument. Essays may be used in any academic discipline but in choosing this particular form of assessment and designing essay questions course leaders should be very clear about exactly what skills they want to assess through the essay. Essays may be written in time-constrained closed book exam conditions or constructed in open conditions over time with regular feedback inputs from peers and teachers. They can be used in both formative and summative assessment.

Affordances/strengths/challenges

Essays are usually designed to test higher cognitive levels of learning but this depends on the construction of the question. Students can be expected to answer a question, develop a substantiated analysis depending on the level of their study and the discipline drawing on relevant conceptual, theoretical knowledge and empirical evidence. Essays may, however, be less appropriate as a method of assessment of professional practice in particular disciplines.

The strengths of this format are that it:

- encourages students to develop their own critical voice and to locate their own position vis-à-vis a broader literature
- encourages students to learn to structure a reasoned argument and to demonstrate the relationships between different lines of analysis
- enables students to develop writing skills and to learn good practice around citing and referencing
- encourages students to link theoretical perspectives from the academic literature to actual cases
- enables students to demonstrate an understanding of the use of empirical evidence to substantiate an argument
- encourages the development and draws on a wide range of disciplinary and transferable skills
- tests higher cognitive levels of learning
- can be used as a form of formative and summative assessment
- setting essay questions may take less time than setting SAQs though careful thought should be given to the design of questions
- demonstrates to potential employers students' ability to condense, analyse and organise into a reasoned argument large amounts of material, complex concepts.

Potential challenges are that this form of assessment when undertaken as formative work or in open book distance learning conditions may be susceptible to plagiarism though plagiarism software such as *Turnitin* can militate against this danger to an extent. Students can progressively work on an essay by submitting an outline or earlier draft for review by a course tutor or peers. Essays may be a source of anxiety particularly when tutors do not adopt a scaffolding approach with preparatory formative tasks. Essays may also pose particular challenges to students who are not fluent English speakers or with certain neurodiverse disabilities (such as dyslexia or dyspraxia). Essays are time-consuming to produce for students and time-consuming for tutors to mark though some essay-marking software packages can limit the time spent on essay marking. Finally detailed marking criteria are required to ensure that marking is reliable – particularly across a large marking team.

How to design a valid and inclusive assessment of this type

Before choosing this method of assessment course leaders should consider whether the essay is the most appropriate method of assessment in the context of the particular discipline, course and the level of the students. As in all assessments it is important for the person designing the essay questions to be clear about what exactly is being assessed, how this aligns with learning outcomes on the course and to make explicit what is expected of the students. In designing essay questions, it may be desirable to think about ways to enable students to draw on their own experiences or examples from their home country in their work. For students who are not used to writing essays, who are not proficient in English and/or who are not clear of what is expected of them essay writing can be a cause of considerable anxiety.

It may be useful to bear the following in mind when designing essay questions:

- At what stage in the course will the essay(s) be undertaken?
- What word limit will be set for the essay?
- How are the students going to be prepared formatively for working on an essay?
- Are the questions expressed in clear language, which is appropriate to the diverse student population?
- How will questions be designed to ensure (if this is important) that the acquisition of knowledge and key analytical skills are tested?
  - Will the students be able to negotiate their own essay questions with the tutor?
  - Will students be asked to prepare an outline of the essay as a part of their formative/summative assessment?
- What attention will be given to developing students' writing skills?
  - Will essay-writing guidance be available on the VLE?
  - Will essay exemplars be made available to the students?
- Will the essay be undertaken in closed-book time-constrained exam conditions or will it be a formative piece of work?
- In the case of a closed-book summative assessment how many essays will the students be expected to answer?
- Will the tutor give feedback on earlier drafts or an essay outline?
- What marking criteria will be used for assessing the essay? Have these marking criteria been shared with and explained to the students in advance?

More broadly, this assessment should be designed with the overall course assessment in mind.

Questions to consider include:

- How do essays facilitate the students' learning on the course?
- Will there be essays in both the formative and summative assessment?
- How do these essays fit with the other forms of assessment on the course?

Safeguards and strategies to avoid and detect misconduct.

Plagiarism detection software can be used for essays submitted via a VLE although of course this is not a fool proof protection against potential ghost-writing. If students submit an essay outline, an annotated bibliography or an earlier draft, tutors can become acquainted with their students' work and this can militate against plagiarism. Careful design of questions can also lessen the chances of plagiarism.

Approaches to marking and feedback / feedforward

Essay marking is potentially a time-consuming activity. In both formative and summative essay writing, it is important to have a clear set of marking criteria.

In both formative and summative work, but particularly the former, markers should be encouraged to think about both the assessment of the learning (how far the work meets the marking criteria and therefore the appropriate mark for the work) as well as assessment for learning. In other words identifying key areas for future development so that students understand where they need to focus on to improve their work in the future. Course essay feedback sheets can be very helpful in this regard. (See the example essay feedback sheet in Appendix II.) Students can be asked to identify particular issues they would like feedback on at the time of submission of their essays. Students should ideally have the opportunity to discuss feedback on their formative work with their tutors but this will of course depend on the size of the cohort. In the case of a large cohort, general feedback on both the strengths and challenges of the essays can be delivered via the VLE.

If there are a number of markers who will be marking the essays it would be useful to organise a peer marking activity to ensure as far as possible reliability across markers.

Multiple choice questions (MCQs)

Description/definition

MCQs consist of a stem, which poses a question or makes a statement, and 2 or more answer options. Within the answer options there is at least one 'key' or correct response and 1 or more 'distracters' (incorrect responses.) For example,

The unelected chamber in the UK Parliament is called

a) the Commons

b) the House of Lords

c) the Privy Council

d) the Highest Committee

e) none of the above

The 'key' in this question is option b.

MCQs make take a variety of forms, including

- True/False
- Matching
- Assertion/Reason
- Multiple response questions.

Affordances/strengths/challenges

There are many affordances to MCQs. These include:

- the potential to cover the breadth of a course in an assessment
- the detailed picture of what students do and do not understand
- can be used in quantitative and qualitative courses
- suitability for self-assessment
- if offered online, the provision for immediate feedback
- ability to test items for reliability and validity (See below.)
- option to create question banks
- possibility of including confidence rating
- quick to mark
- option of creating adaptive tests (See below.)

Challenges include:

- limited ability for students to be creative
- no scope for the development of an argument or justification of answers
- possibility of guessing correct response
- writing unambiguous questions that test the required level of knowledge and understanding.

How to design a valid and inclusive assessment of this type

An advantage of MCQs is that they can be tested for validity and reliability in advance of their use in high stakes examinations. They can be trialled as additional, not-for-credit, questions within a larger exam or bank of practice questions.

Item statistics can be generated for each question and its component parts depending on how they 'perform' in assessments. The two broad methods of gaining information about the performance of a question are 1) classical test construction and 2) latent trait analysis (Bull and McKenna, 2004). Some information about validity and reliability of test items can be generated automatically in some online assessment packages.

Safeguards and strategies to avoid and detect misconduct.

Strategies to deter misconduct during an examination include:

- setting individualised tests which draw appropriate items from banks of validated questions, so that each candidate sits a unique exam.
- using randomised tests so that each candidate sits the same set of questions but they appear in different order. This reduces the likelihood of collusion during a test.
- offering adaptive testing in which the assessment is adapted to the candidate by taking into account previous responses. If a candidate can answer a series of questions at a certain level correctly, the test is adjusted to match the test-taker's ability. This approach can be used with online assessment and is viewed as an efficient way of judging a test-taker's ability with the material. It also means that, as with the previous examples, the assessment is unique to that candidate, thereby minimising the risk of collusion.

Approaches to marking and feedback / feedforward

MCQs are quick to mark and, if administered online, can offer immediate feedback which can indicate the correctness of the response as well as suggest reasons why the answer was right or not. The feedback can also suggest further study or include hints about other ways of approaching the topic. (Some online question types enable staged feedback, so that an initial incorrect response offers the test-taker partial feedback and another attempt at selecting the correct answer from the remaining question responses.)

The scope for immediate feedback and the ability to generate large question banks in online environments makes MCQs particularly well-suited to formative, self-assessment. Although writing the initial feedback for each question response is time consuming at the outset, once it has been completed, the feedback can be reused during the life of the course.

Oral presentations

Description/definition

Students are assessed on a prepared oral presentation. The specific task may vary: students can be asked to report, explain, persuade, argue, or teach, for example. There may be an element of role play, such as being asked to adopt a particular perspective. Typically, the student gives the presentation to an audience and responds to questions. Often, the presenter is expected to create supporting material such as slides or handouts and is assessed also on the quality and use made of these.

Affordances/strengths/challenges

Strengths

- good for assessing presentation skills needed in future employment and research
  - can help students develop and demonstrate attributes employers value
- provides an environment in which students can engage in the discourse of the discipline
- can assess similar things to an essay
- an opportunity for peer assessment and feedback
- immediate feedback can be given
- opportunity for formative feedback
  - can be part of the process of developing an essay or a project
- can be an individual or a group task
- quick to mark

Challenges

- 'Live' presentations have to be timetabled and require staff and student presence for an extended time period.
- Time zone differences may make real-time presentations difficult in distance education.
- Training and support may be needed if using network technologies.
- Network fluctuations may affect communication.

How to design a valid and inclusive assessment of this type

Oral presentations may seem difficult to arrange in a distance learning context but this is not necessarily the case. They can be managed in various ways:

- face-to-face at a local centre, marked there and video recorded to provide a record
- recorded by individual students and uploaded for assessment
- in real-time via *Skype* or a conferencing system such as *Collaborate*.

If a recording is submitted, a separate question and answer session can be arranged at a later date.

Issues related to inclusivity include student digital literacies and access to technologies. Incorporating an oral assessment task such as a presentation into the assessment adds variety, which is inclusive. It is also worth noting that some education systems make greater use of oral assessment than does the UK. Where possible, course convenors should be encouraged to use familiar technologies and allow time for students to practise in advance.

As with any aspect of the course, provision needs to be made for students with disabilities or specific learning difficulties and this may extend to offering an alternative form of assessment.

The technologies may be challenging for some students. Set against this, experience of communicating using such systems may be valued by employers and be part of a future work or further study environment.

The learning outcomes/graduate attributes the presentation is intended to assess should be communicated to the students and the assessment criteria should also be shared and explained. This example gives instructions for both on campus and distance learning students:

nexus.cqu.edu.au/assignmentview/displayDocument/1543/POUL.Task2+description.nexus.pdf

See the ‘Resources' section for further examples of oral assessment criteria and rubrics.

Example

In the International Programmes MSc/PGDip/PGCert in Livestock Health and Production a journal article prepared for a named journal is used for assessment of the research project and an oral examination, conducted via teleconference, is part of the assessment. This assessment task also has the advantage of being an authentic activity that would be part of professional practice or future research.

Safeguards and strategies to avoid and detect misconduct.

What are the main risks and are they any different from the risks associated with written coursework?

It will be reassuring if students appear in person, present convincingly and answer audience and tutor questions appropriately. They may have had help with preparation but this would be normal in professional life. Rather than discouraging this, a good strategy is to acknowledge it, build it into the assessment, ask students what help and feedback they received and reward them for making good use of this.

Submitting a recording may carry more risks but a local supervisor or community tutor could oversee and authenticate recordings. A separate question/answer session could take place once the recording has been submitted.

As with other forms of assessment, it helps to be in touch with the development process, rather than assessing something previously unseen. Questions can be asked about process: selection of material, ordering, choice of visual material, accommodating this particular audience, things to do better next time. Students can submit an outline and a list of resources in advance of the presentation.

Approaches to marking and feedback / feedforward

- Marking usually takes place at the time of presentation so is relatively economical of time. However, live presentations need a time allocation. If recorded presentations are submitted, the marking time may increase slightly but the timetabling issue disappears.
- Assessing on the spot means that you need a manageable set of criteria, perhaps covering no more than two or three areas (see marking rubric examples).
- Oral presentations offer opportunities for peer feedback. A good plan is to share the criteria with students. They may need some training to ensure that they give constructive feedback.
- Feedback can be immediate.
- It is common to record oral presentations but generally the recordings are simply stored for reference in case there is any uncertainty about marking.
- Marking depends on the purpose of the assessment. Oral presentations can be purely formative, in which case the students will be told how they have performed in relation to the criteria. A summative assessment may require marks or a grade. In such cases, the marking scheme may allocate marks to each of the elements being assessed. Sometimes an oral presentation may be a requirement in order to pass the course but not itself carry any marks.

Resources

This video from University of New South Wales describes use of Pecha-kucha presentations (20 slides for 20 seconds) for assessment: teaching.unsw.edu.au/oral-presentations

This document from the University of Exeter pre-dates some of the technologies we now use for online communication but it includes tips on oral presentations for distance learning students. Some of these would still be useful: education.exeter.ac.uk/dll/studyskills/oral_presentation.pdf

Open University – assessing oral presentations in distance education: oro.open.ac.uk/41291/

Other online assessment activities

Moodle offers tools to support a variety of formative and summative assessment activities and these can be used to diversify assessment for distance learning students. This is an overview of the affordances of a **wiki, forum, blog** and **database**. All are available within *Moodle*. There are some excellent online platforms for these activities available externally but advice should be undertaken on whether it is possible to use these for assessment, since they would be without International Programmes technical support.

Affordances/strengths/challenges

All four tools have the potential to support student interaction and collaboration and they also enable individual contributions to be identified. Affordances and challenges include

- It is easy to share contributions with peers and tutors.
- All can be used asynchronously, thus supporting work across time zones.
- Managing, monitoring and marking may be time-consuming and raise questions about scalability but these tools also offer opportunities to support larger groups.
- Scalability depends to an extent on the approach to marking (see below).

Database

The *Moodle* database allows students to add individual entries, which might be text, links, images or other files, together with structured information about these. The entries can be displayed and searched. It therefore supports building a bank of resources on any theme, especially if this is a collaborative effort by a group or the whole cohort.

Wiki

A wiki (Wikipedia for example) is an online writing space that multiple contributors can share and edit. A group of students, or an individual, can use it to create a resource on a particular topic or theme. It is easy to create new pages and to create links between pages. It supports the assessment of structure and organisation of material but it is not the best tool if the visual design of the web pages is to be assessed.

Forum

A forum allows individuals to exchange ideas by posting messages and comments. It is suited to a series of short-to-medium-length contributions with a single focus rather than an essay-length exploration of a topic. In addition to composing contributions, it allows students to develop their ability to comment on and critique other viewpoints without being destructive. Activities can be designed to assess construction of an argument, criticality, digital literacies and/or collaborative working.

Akin & Neal (2007) give examples of question types for use in online discussion. These include literature-based, experiential and evaluative/reflective questions.

Blog

As discussed in the section on blogs above, a blog (web log) is a web page where the writer can make regular additions over a period of time, with the most recent usually displayed first. Hyperlinks, images, audio and video can be included with the text. Contributions can be added by an individual or by a group. See also the individual entry on using blogs in assessment.

Examples of assessment activities/e-tivities

- *Regular reviews, responses, updates or reflections, using a blog:* These might include thoughts on lectures or course readings, reports on progress with a project of dissertation, reflections on a work placement, event, or study abroad.
- *Creating and annotating an online collection, using a wiki or database:* This might involve collecting digital artefacts, images, text or audio, in order to create an online exhibition, theatre season, music or poetry programme, or theme-based event. It can be collaborative activity for a group or a whole class or individual work. Students may collect items that already exist on the Internet and be assessed on the way they use these and what they add to them in terms of commentary/annotations. Alternatively, they may make a collection of their own writing or photographs and be assessed both on the quality of these and on the story created by collecting them together.
- *Creating a website on a course-related topic for a specified audience or purpose.*
- *Using a database to create a class library.*

Students on a MA/PGCert in Higher Education conducted small-scale literature searches early in the course and added research papers they had found to the database, with brief comments. The resulting bank of resources was available to the whole group. In this case the activity was a course requirement but did not carry any marks.

Assessment in the International Programmes MA in Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies includes 30% for 'e-tivities'. These activities vary and include reviews of journal articles, project outlines and completion of a library tutorial.

Human Resource Management students (MSc/PGDip) are required to take part in 'Computer Conferencing' activities. These are tutor led discussions on which students are expected to make a least two contributions. The conferencing is not assessed but may impact on whether a student can go forward to sit the examination.

Designing the assessment

As in all assessments, it is important for the person setting the online assessments to be clear about what exactly is being assessed, how this aligns with learning outcomes on the course and to make it explicit what is expected of the students. It is important to ensure that students understand what is required, are aware of the marking criteria and procedures. If regular contributions are required, guidance should be given on number, frequency and length as a minimum.

As with all aspects of the course, reasonable adjustments may need to be made in order to accommodate students' needs.

Induction of students is particularly important. It is always advisable to begin with short-duration, low-stakes activities to familiarise the students with this way of working. While students may be familiar with similar tools in their personal lives they may not necessarily know what is expected in an academic context – for example in citing, acknowledging and responding to other people's ideas.

Approaches to marking and feedback

These activities can be used for both formative and summative assessment. They can also be a course requirement without carrying any marks (threshold assessment). Sometimes students are given credit for citing their own and peers' online contributions in essays for summative assessment.

Ongoing activities such as discussion or blogging can be time-consuming for staff to monitor and assess, so scalability may be a concern in large courses. Group working and peer feedback can contribute to assessment and slightly reduce the marking load for staff. If this approach is adopted, it is important to make it clear to students what the tutor's role is, to avoid false expectations. Students may be assessed only on a selection of contributions. Use of community tutors can help both with marking and day-to-day management and monitoring.

Assessment will often consider participation, quality of information, evidence of critical thinking, use of reference material in addition to any discipline-specific criteria.

Resources

Akin, L., & Neal, D., CREST+ Model: Writing Effective Online Discussion Questions, *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, Vol 3,No. 2, June 2007, online at **jolt.merlot.org/vol3no2/akin.htm**, accessed 22/09/2015

Staffordshire university best practice materials:
bestpracticemodels.wiki.staffs.ac.uk/e-Learning_Tools/Discussion_Forum

Policy Paper

Description/definition

Policy papers are written papers of varying length which address a legitimate contemporary policy issue within the context of the current policy environment. A policy paper presents clear alternatives to the current policy. The policy recommendations should be evidenced based and thus include sufficient empirical evidence to enable the intended decision-making information to make a decision on the policy proposal.

Policy papers may be an appropriate form of assessment in a range of different disciplines including economics, finance, law, social policy and political science. Clear, precise and succinct presentation and format are integral parts of this method of assessment.

A policy paper may include the following components:

- an executive summary
- an outline of current policy in a particular area
- reasons for proposing changes
- possible policy options
- the advantages and disadvantages of each option (Cost-benefits analysis)
- recommended course of action
- rationale for recommended course of action
- appendices.

Possible examples might include the relaxation or tightening of immigration or customs law in a particular country or region or adherence to or rejection of new aspects of international law, intellectual property rights, etc.

Affordances/strengths /challenges

Policy papers allow students to engage with a contemporary policy issue and develop policy solutions to complex current issues thus operating at higher cognitive levels.

The strengths of this method of assessment are:

- enables students to engage with real world issues
- encourages students to apply conceptual and theoretical knowledge to complex contemporary policy issues, to evaluate options and provide a substantiated rationale for the recommendation course of action.
- enables students to develop an understanding of the use of empirical evidence and data to underpin a proposal
- enables students to work on an issue which is of real interest to them and may relate to their own country
- can be an individual or group assessment
- can be assessed in written and/or in oral form
- can involve a negotiation between the teacher and the student over the subject of the policy paper
- can be worked on over time with elements of peer learning and feedback built in to the process
- enables the teacher to develop valuable employability skills in his/her students
- tests higher cognitive levels of learning.

Potential challenges are that the assignment assesses knowledge and the application of knowledge in a particular area rather than the breadth of knowledge across a curriculum. Policy papers are not historical analyses nor are they studies of how and why something works. The differences between a policy paper and an academic essay/research paper need to be clearly explained to the students.

Ensuring inclusive and effective assessment design

As in all assessments it is important for the person setting the policy paper to be clear about what exactly is being assessed, how this aligns with learning outcomes on the course and to make explicit what is expected of the students. This is particularly important as students may not be used to this method of assessment. At the same time policy papers are an attractive form of assessment as they enable students to draw on their local context and experience, and possibly to carry out some research as an integral part of their coursework.

It may be useful to bear the following in mind when designing policy papers:

- How long is the policy paper?
- What formatting and content guidelines will be given to the students?
- How are the students going to be prepared formatively for working on a policy paper? What additional structured activities might be designed into the course as part of this process?
- Will the students be able to negotiate the topic of their policy paper with the teacher?
- Will students be asked to prepare an outline of the policy paper as a part of their formative/summative assessment?
- Will the policy paper be a group or individual assignment? In the case of a group assignment will there be elements of group and individual assessment?
- How will marks be allocated for the different elements of the policy paper?
- Will format and presentation be assessed? If so, what proportion of the marks will be allocated to format and presentation?

More broadly, this assessment should be designed with the overall course assessment in mind. Questions to consider include:

- How does the policy paper enable the students to meet their intended learning outcomes?
- How does the policy paper fit with the other forms of assessment on the course?

Safeguards and strategies to avoid and detect misconduct

If a staged process of preparation of the policy paper including negotiation over the topic, formative/summative preparation of an outline/other on-line structured activities form part of the learning design, then a tutor should be able to see the development of ideas over time.

The policy paper could be passed through *Turnitin* or other similar plagiarism detection software to ensure that the work is indeed original.

Approaches to marking and feedback/ feedforward

An advantage of this assignment is that there are distinct components that can be reflected in the marking criteria.

These might include:

- *argument:* Is the argument credible and convincing and effectively supported by evidence?
- *structure and presentation:* Does the policy paper have a clear and coherent structure? Are the ideas logically and clearly expressed?
- *analysis:* Is the analysis well-developed synthesising data and/or the relevant literature?
- *conclusion and policy recommendations:* Does the candidate integrate key findings and ideas in the conclusion? Are the policy recommendations clear and feasible and do they follow logically from the main findings?

Students can learn from each other and get peer feedback if there is an opportunity to present a draft of their policy papers to each other in oral or written form through the VLE with a clear set of criteria. Students can also be asked to indicate how they have responded to feedback over time if a staged approach is taken to the preparation of the policy paper thus developing their own capacity to self-assess. The final marking of policy papers may be time-consuming with a large cohort of students but marking can be facilitated with a clear set of criteria both for oral and written assessments.

Portfolio

Description/definition

A portfolio is a collection of a range of texts which have been composed at varying points during a module. Generally, a portfolio is compiled and submitted at the end of the module and it frequently contains a reflective introduction or conclusion which draws the collection together.

Portfolios can offer evidence of the learning process if drafts of work are included. Alternatively, they can be collections of polished texts which emphasise student achievement of module learning goals.

Affordances/strengths/challenges

Strengths of portfolios include:

- the ability to include a range of text types and approaches in one assessment format
- opportunities for student choice:
- the regular writing of shorter texts which motivates ongoing engagement with module topics and supports writing development in the discipline.
- space for students' reflection on their writing and learning development
- the capacity to *design out* plagiarism and identity fraud: tutors can view the learning process via ongoing drafts and the assessment is not one that can easily be copied from elsewhere
- the potential for drawing upon work that has been undertaken with peers.
- opportunities for an ongoing dialogue between students and teachers about what is included and how formative texts might be developed and collected.
- emphasis on self-reflection and critical appraisal of students' work across a module
- option to compile in an online environment (which offers multimodal formats such as video or audio).

Challenges

- Portfolios might require more marking time if all individual pieces are being assessed separately. Ways to avoid this might be to offer a single, holistic mark for the collection OR to only mark a subset of the items in the collection. If the latter, course convenors might consider asking students to nominate pieces for marking in order to introduce student choice into the process. Furthermore, if formative feedback/feedforward is provided for the individual pieces during the course of the module (either by tutors or peers), then it is possible to offer a summative mark for the portfolio with more succinct comments for the final grading of the assignment.
- The portfolio process may require more management and support from the module leader than other forms of assessment, particularly if this method is unfamiliar to some students.

How to design a valid and inclusive assessment of this type

The flexibility of portfolios means that they can be used to assess a range of learning; different topics, approaches, genres and perspectives can be addressed within one method. Additionally, the validity of the portfolio as assessment method might lie both in its individual components as well as in the collection as a whole. For example, individual elements might align with particular learning outcomes, or, alternatively, the ability to combine different texts coherently and to weave the items together (through either an introduction or with linking passages between texts) could demonstrate one or more learning goals for the module. Additionally, a reflective conclusion might offer an additional space in which students can demonstrate certain skills and abilities.

Of course, it is worth remembering that portfolios can also be collections of pieces that are not necessarily linked together. In either case, linking the portfolio back to the module learning outcomes helps ensure that the assignment is valid. Portfolios can be a good way of addressing multiple learning outcomes, because the assignments included within them can be diverse and varied.

One approach to inclusive assessment is to ensure some student choice within the assessment diet, and a portfolio is a good way of doing this. As suggested above, the arrangements for compiling the portfolio might include student choice in some of the following:

- the nature of the texts: e.g. title, topic, approach
- the selection of texts for the portfolio
- the selection of which texts are marked.

Portfolios are flexible formats: they can accommodate diverse tasks and activities as well as a mix of voice and genres. Because portfolios vary in nature and may be unfamiliar to some students, it is important to provide clear guidance on what is expected and how the portfolios will be assessed.

The International Programmes MA in Education, Introduction to Social Research includes portfolios as a form of assessment. For this module, one component of the assessment is a portfolio of responses from seminar activities. .

Safeguards and strategies to avoid and detect misconduct

As suggested above, portfolios can form part of a strategy to deter academic misconduct because they can contain work that has been developed from earlier drafts, so that markers can see a progression in the writing. The work can also have resulted from specific activities, such as exercises from a seminar or online chat discussion. Such texts would be directly related to the course and difficult to plagiarise. Furthermore, reflective writing that may form part of a portfolio would, again, be particular to the student writer, potentially drawing upon their experience across a module and almost impossible to plagiarise or impersonate, particularly if the tutor has built up a relationship with the student. Finally, if students are expected to produce texts in the portfolio that have taken into account formative feedback on earlier drafts, then, again, a marker should see evidence of this development that helps verify that students are submitting their own work.

Approaches to marking and feedback / feedforward

Portfolios offer rich opportunities for feedback.

Firstly, the early drafts of the texts could attract formative feedback, either from peers or tutors. Additionally, students could engage in self-assessment and appraise their own early drafts. (All versions and accompanying feedback could potentially be included in portfolios, if desirable.)

A portfolio also offers an explicit opportunity for students to *demonstrate how they have responded* to feedback in subsequent drafts. Such observations could be made in the introduction or conclusion of a portfolio in which students consider how they have developed the work during the module.

Posters

Description/definition

Posters present text and graphical information on a single page or screen. They offer students a way of working with academic material that emphasizes visual and spatial meaning making and requires a close consideration of audience. Additionally, a poster is an *authentic* form of assessment, with applications to a range of real life, professional contexts.

Affordances/strengths/challenges

Strengths

- can be undertaken individually or with peers. Peers can be involved in offering feedback and marking
- offers an opportunity to present material visually and to respond to a new set of audience reading practices
- introduces variety and creativity into the assessment profile of the module or programme
- requires concision and precision
- may be seen as a skill relevant to future employment
- has potential to be combined with other assessment formats such as presentation, literature review, dissertation proposal
- offers the chance to share assessment within the group, possibly as an informal conference – either virtually or face to face
- may involve students in determining marking criteria
- is a format relevant to most disciplines.

Challenges

- may require extra preparation time to support technical skills and visual literacies required
- could result in large file sizes which might be a challenge to share
- copyright issues may need to be considered when reproducing visual materials
- may need extra teaching time to explain, discuss and mark posters.

How to design a valid and inclusive assessment of this type

Posters can be aligned with module learning outcomes and may help address learning goals such as presenting material concisely and accurately; addressing different audiences; using different genres to convey academic material and working in teams.

Posters help support a strategy for inclusive assessment because they introduce variety and offer an alternative to longer written texts. In particular, students may appreciate the opportunity to work with images, graphics and page layout to express academic ideas.

Examples

Cook (no date) 'Case study – poster session assessment'
www.sddu.leeds.ac.uk/casestudies/casestudy.php?ID=120

This case study describes the introduction of posters as an assessment method in the study of German modernity at the University of Leeds.

Coyle, A. (2014) 'Group posters and pinboards with Padlet'
www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/casestudies/Group+Posters+and+Pinboards+with+Padlet

This case study describes the use of Padlet, (a free, digital 'pinboard tool') to create posters with groups of online, distance learners in veterinary medicine at the University of Edinburgh. The webpage includes a presentation on the rationale for using posters, guidance given to students and an example of a group poster.

O'Neill, G. and Jennings, D. (2012) 'The use of posters for assessment: a guide for staff' www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCDTLA0039.pdf

This excellent, detailed guide from University College Dublin offers comprehensive support for students in the rationale, design, formatting and production of posters. It also describes different approaches to developing marking criteria, addresses accessibility and outlines methods of using posters for peer working.

Safeguards and strategies to avoid and detect misconduct.

Posters can be produced in stages. Students could present storyboards for their early drafts and share these online. Tutors would then have a sense of the development of the work leading up to the final submission and this would help ensure that final poster was the work of the student or group who presented it.

Additionally, entire posters are arguably harder to locate, copy and paste than other types of assignments. However, it is useful to explain to students how to reference text and images that appear on posters and to provide an exemplar.

Approaches to marking and feedback / feedforward

Posters offer a number of opportunities for formative feedback/feedforward as well as self and peer assessment. As suggested above, students can share ideas with peers and/or tutors at an early stage in the process in which they present a rough draft or storyboard of the poster, perhaps outlining the key areas of content, layout, images and development of ideas. This early work could be critiqued by the student, peers and/or tutors, and the student (or students if working in a group) can then respond to the feedback in subsequent drafts.

Final posters could be displayed in a virtual or face to face conference and peers and tutors could jointly contribute to the assessment of them. The poster presentation could be combined with a short talk by the author(s).

Posters may also offer an opportunity for negotiated marking. Early on in the process, students and tutors could jointly agree which features of the poster and the process would be assessed and this may increase students' understanding of what is expected and their confidence in developing the assignment.

Short answer questions

Description/definition

Short answer questions (SAQs) tend to be open-ended questions (in contrast to MCQs) and are designed to elicit a direct response from students. SAQs can be used to check knowledge and understanding, support engagement with academic literature or a particular case study and to encourage a progressive form of learning. They can be used in both formative and summative assessment.

SAQs may take a range of different forms such as short descriptive or qualitative single sentence answers, diagrams or graphs with explanations, filling in missing words in a sentence, list of answers. As the name suggests, the answer is usually short.

Affordances/strengths/challenges

SAQs are often used to check basic levels of knowledge and understanding thus enabling teachers and students alike to subsequently move on to higher cognitive levels.

The strengths of this format are that it:

- encourages students to embed foundational knowledge in relevant areas
- can encourage students to study progressively over time which is important in a distance learning setting
- enables students to test their own knowledge and understanding and identify areas for future study
- can be used formatively as a lead up to a longer assignment
- enables the tutor to test the understanding/prior knowledge of her/his students and if necessary adjust certain elements of the course in real time
- is attractive when there are large numbers of students in the cohort and a number of different markers are involved in the marking process
- short answers can be designed, set and marked relatively quickly
- lessens the need for extensive feedback
- automatic response systems with more thorough explanations can be set up through the VLE depending on the nature of the SAQs
- can be used as part of formative and/or summative assessment
- limits the opportunities for guessing, unlike the more structured MCQs.

Potential challenges of this form of assessment are that on the whole it tests lower or foundational levels of learning and may encourage surface approaches to learning. SAQs can be used to test deeper levels of learning but this demands careful attention to the design of the questions. If short answer questions are to be used in summative assessment they tend to be used alongside longer essays and other longer forms of assessment and thus time management is crucial.

How to design a valid and inclusive assessment of this type

As in all assessments it is important for the person setting the short answers to be clear about what exactly is being assessed, how this aligns with learning outcomes on the course and to make explicit what is expected of the students. This is particularly important as the questions are open-ended and thus students must choose how to answer the questions.

It may be useful to bear the following in mind when designing SAQs:

For example,

- How much time should be spent on the short answer questions?
- What is expected in the answer? – one or two sentences, three bullet points, a single word to fill in the gaps, a stage in a problem set, etc. Are the instructions to the students specific enough?
- Are the questions expressed in clear language which is appropriate to the diverse student population?
- How will marks or part-marks be allocated for acceptable answer (s)?

More broadly, this assessment should be designed with the overall course assessment in mind.

Questions to consider include:

- Will there be SAQs in both the formative and summative assessment?
- How do these SAQs fit with the other forms of assessment on the course?
- How do these short answer questions facilitate the students' learning on the course and how will it enable them to prepare for their summative assessment?
- Will a small number of marks be allocated for the SAQs on a weekly basis to encourage students to study their knowledge and understanding over time rather than studying only for time-constrained exams at the end of the course?

Safeguards and strategies to avoid and detect misconduct.

One of the strengths of this format is that it can form part of a strategy to prevent plagiarism within a course. A tutor ought to be able to see the development of students' learning over time.

SAQs can be used on a weekly basis as a formative activity – allocating some marks each week or marks for a portion of the SAQs.

Approaches to marking and feedback / feedforward

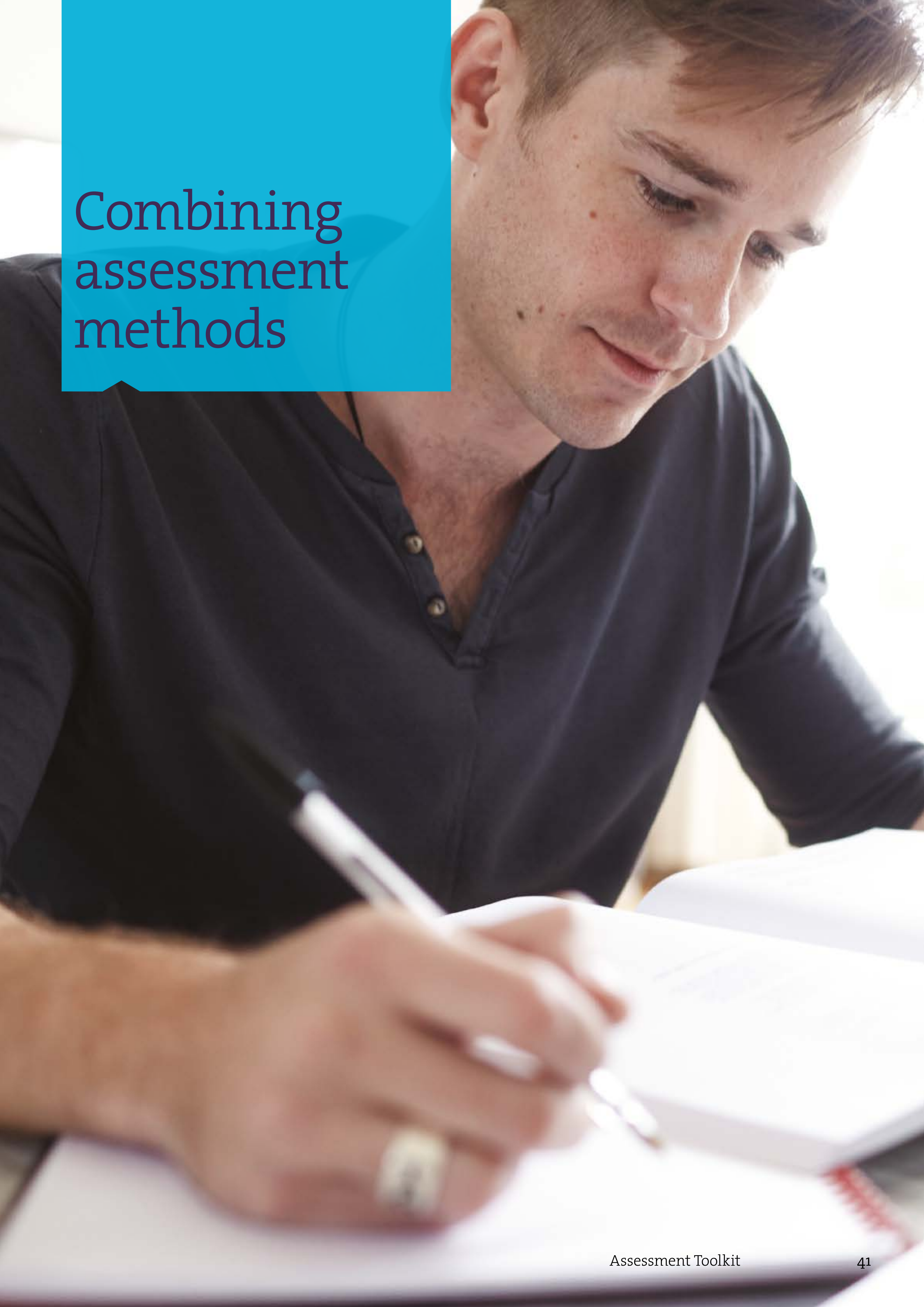
SAQs can be designed, set and marked relatively quickly. An advantage of this assignment is that short answers can be designed to test discrete areas of knowledge and understanding that can be reflected in the marking criteria. At the same time tutors must agree on an approach to marking unexpected but correct answers.

Depending on the nature of the SAQs marking may simply involve checking answers against a list of correct answers. Alternatively a set of criteria may be used based on some of the following:

- *factual knowledge about a topic:* Have the questions been answered correctly?
- *clear, precise definition:* does the student give a clear, precise definition?
- *numerical answers:* will marks be given on the process as well as the outcomes?
- *writing style:* mastery of language, structure, accuracy of grammar and spelling.

Example marking rubrics:
ar.cetl.hku.hk/am_saq.htm#6

Combining assessment methods



Combining assessment methods

Combining assessment methods helps ensure that the full range of the module or course is assessed and that students can experience (and respond to) diverse approaches.

When designing assessment across a module or a programme, it is useful to consider

- how the different methods contribute to the coverage of content
- ways in which the methods assess different learning outcomes
- whether the combined methods offer students the opportunity to demonstrate a range of skills, strengths and capabilities
- the extent to which the breadth of methods makes the module/programme more inclusive and accessible
- how different methods complement, contrast or build upon each other
- the implications of different methods for marking and scalability
- the effects of weighting when combining methods
- the range of feedback formats.

Mapping an assessment combination

A mapping exercise may be particularly useful for programme leaders considering a review of assessment methods across the programme. It helps to lay out the combined potential of a set of assessment methods across a module or programme. It may also identify any areas of the curriculum that are under assessed and create opportunities for innovation.

One approach to mapping is to set the learning outcomes and/or desired learning goals across the top of the grid and the different assessment types down the side. In each box, the extent to which each outcome/goal is addressed by a particular method is indicated.

For example, the grid below analyses a module in which an essay, presentation and MCQ test are used in combination and considers to what degree they assess each of the key course attributes.

	Ability to develop a coherent argument	Understanding of a broad range of topics	Capacity to critique and build on module content	Ability to formulate spoken responses to questions
Essay	xxx	x	xx	
Presentation	xx	x	xx	xxx
MCQ test		xxx	x	

Case study: Masters in Global Diplomacy, SOAS, The Art of Negotiation course

This course, run by Dr Simon Rofe as part of the MA in Global Diplomacy, blends formative and summative assessment, all of which are set out in the *Moodle* site, framed as 'e-tivities'. (See Figure 1.)

The assessment profile offers students a range of complementary tasks with opportunities for peer review and self-reflection. The earlier tasks are more formative in nature, but they carry some weight which means that students can approach the work as developmental, while still being awarded marks for their effort. Additionally, all the shorter tasks help prepare students for the final, summative activity: the 3-hour exam.

Figure 1: screenshot from Art of Negotiation *Moodle* e-tivities page.

The assessment includes the following:

- Activity 1: **Introduction post** (formative) in which students submit a short piece about themselves and then respond to at least 2 other student posts. (No marks are awarded for this.)
- Activity 2: **A short annotated bibliography** PLUS a critique of the bibliography of another student. (5%)
- Activity 3: **Critical analysis (1)** of a set article (400 words) PLUS critique of peers' analyses and **reflection** on process of comparing student's own work with that of others (5 %)
- Activity 4: **Essay Plan** (1000–1200 words) PLUS online discussion with peers about plans (15%)
- Activity 5: **Critical analysis** (2) of a set article (400 words) PLUS critique of peers' analyses and **reflection** on process of comparing student's own work with that of others (400 words) (5 %)
- Activity 6: A seen 3-hour **essay exam** (70%)

As Figure 3 shows, the assessment activities are distributed across the term which means students can pace themselves and both students and tutors can identify potential difficulties or misconceptions early on. Additionally, this distributed schedule enables students to use feedback from early formative work to inform subsequent activities.

Finally, each item of assessment is framed in terms of its 1) purpose, 2) the actual task (and follow up response) and 3) the learning outcome (s). (See Figure 2.) As suggested above, this detailed description helps students understand what they are expected to do; how they can discuss the work with peers and how the task fits into the course aims.

Case study: Masters in Global Diplomacy, SOAS, The Art of Negotiation course (cont'd)

Due Date:	**12 November 2013**
Purpose:	To analyse this well-known article and identify its major attributes: 1. Rudin Harry R., 'Diplomacy, Democracy, Security: Two Centuries in Contrast', *Political Science Quarterly*, 71/ 2, (June, 1956) pp. 161-181. or 2. Morgenthau, Hans, Diplomacy, *The Yale Law Journal*, No.55 Vol.5 August 1946, pp.1067-1080.
Task:	Read one of the above articles and provide a brief analysis of it (maximum 400 words) to the e-tivity 3 Forum. An article analysis is an opportunity for concise and critical reflection on the detractions, merits, and implications of your chosen article. Then proceed to the respond section
Respond:	In the e-tivity 3 Forum please post comments on the analyses provided by other students by way of illustrating there are multiple approaches to understanding the same text. Consider such issues as whether you agree with the analysis provided by others, or whether other students have focussed on different aspects, or drawn different conclusions. Comment constructively in no more than 400 words on how comparing these interpretations have helped improved your own understanding and your own original view of the article. Then submit these to TurnItIn.
Outcome:	You will be able to analyse the content of a scholarly article and share your thoughts on it.

Figure 2: Art of Negotiation, Screenshot of E-tivity 3: Text Critique

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E-tivity deadlines

Assessment	Percentage of overall mark	No. of day/approx weeks	Start Dates	Submission Dates	Release Marks
Etivity 1	0%	3 days	14-Oct-13	17-Oct-13	
Etivity 2	5%	10 days	18-Oct-13	28-Oct-13	03-Nov-13
Etivity 3	5%	2 weeks	29-Oct-13	12-Nov-13	18-Nov-13
Etivity 4	15%	3 weeks	13-Nov-13	04-Dec-13	09-Jan-14
Etivity 5	5%	4 weeks	05-Dec-13	02-Jan-13	08-Jan-14
Etivity 6	70%	5 weeks	03-Jan-14	11-Feb-14	
		16 weeks		EXAM (am)	

Figure 3: Art of Negotiation: Screenshot of Assessment weightings, timings and schedule.

Weightings

As seen in the case study above, weighting can be used to place emphasis on particular assessments according to method and timing. So, an end of term assignment typically carries more weight than an earlier one. Additionally, course convenors experimenting with a new method of assessment, might wish to assign it a lighter weighting, perhaps 5 – 25 % to see how it works. A lighter weighting might encourage students to take risks and try out new approaches. At the same time, a light weighting (of 5–10%), particularly for assessment which is broadly formative in nature, could be used to enable the work to be developmental while still rewarding students for their effort. Moreover even a small amount of marks may incentivise students on distance learning programmes to actively engage in the learning process from early on.

Finally, it is possible to include assessment items that attract no marks but which must be completed successfully to pass the module. These are sometimes referred to as threshold assignments. For example, a student might be required to produce a draft outline of a piece of work before being allowed to submit an essay. Or, a presentation could be required but not awarded a mark. (It could still receive feedback, however.)

Scalability

Depending on numbers of students on a programme or module and the resources available to the teaching team for marking and assessment, scalability may be an issue to consider in relation to breadth of assessment. Some assessment methods, such as MCQs, short answer and computer based assignments, may be more scalable than others, simply because they take less time to mark and provide feedback. They may, however, take longer to construct in the first place; even MCQs can be challenging to write and test for validity, so this needs to be factored into the overall planning. These methods tend to be more scalable when collected into banks of items that can be reused.

Essays and presentations, for example, tend to be less scalable, but they might be more valid for the syllabus that is being examined.

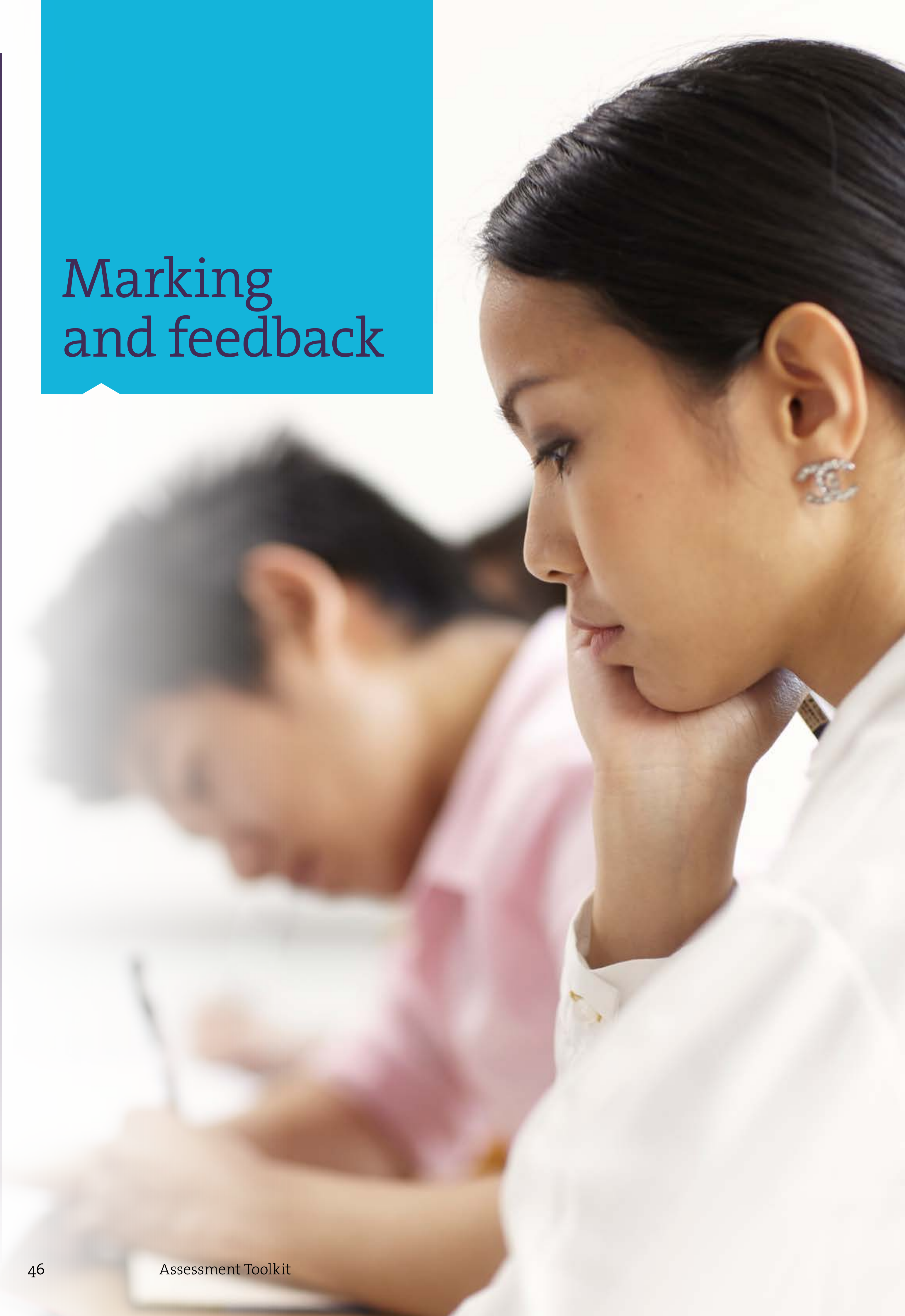
Scalability depends, in part, on the number of people on the teaching team. One way of increasing the size of the team is the use of Community Tutors, a cascade model adopted by the MA in Global Diplomacy. Here, students who have graduated from the course are trained as community tutors who then support online discussion and can participate in the assessment process. Typically, community tutors have experience in policy advising, journalism, research and diplomatic practice and they can share this with students.[7]

Other ways of addressing scalability in relation to teaching and marking include

- running Q and A sessions online which are recorded and posted to the VLE (a method used by LAWs)
- using webinars as a means of exploring ideas with a large group
- creating group feedback (written or spoken) which is then uploaded to the VLE.

7 londoninternational.ac.uk/community/londonconnection/articles/features/new-ma-global-diplomacy-launches

Marking and feedback



Marking and feedback

Marking and feedback are critical to the overall assessment process and they have a significant impact on student learning. In this section, we will consider:

- marking processes and practices
- the purposes of feedback
- approaches to delivering and drafting
- modes of feedback
- further issues to consider when designing feedback.

Marking processes and practices

Marking criteria (and assessment more generally) should align with the module learning outcomes. Questions to consider in relation to marking criteria include

- Does the assessment enable students to engage with and demonstrate the learning outcomes and the broader aims of the course?
- Can the marking criteria be mapped to the learning outcomes and specific elements of the course?
- Do the students have access to the marking criteria in advance of completing the assignment and have the marking criteria been explained to the students; in other words, do they understand how their work is being judged?

There are different approaches to marking and moderation that project teams might consider. The process of moderation entails assuring that the marking criteria have been applied fairly and consistently across a set of assignments.

For summative assessment, moderation approaches might include

Purposes of feedback

Feedback can be designed for a range of purposes and it is useful to consider how the course team would like to use feedback in order to determine when it should be offered, how it might be constructed and what its focus and tone might be.

The following questions might help shape the approach to feedback:

What are the purposes of the feedback?

- To justify a mark?
- To offer constructive criticism of a piece?
- To help students in future work?
- To stimulate dialogue with students?
- To encourage and motivate a student?
- To outline the performance of a cohort as a whole?

Feedback is likely to have a number of purposes. Feedback that justifies and explains a mark may be part of a summative assessment process, helping students to understand how their work was judged according to the marking criteria.

Formative feedback should be seen as an integral part of the learning process and should be developmental and focus on improving future work. This approach is also known as feedforward and is underpinned by the idea that feedback is most useful to students when it is oriented towards their ongoing learning with suggestions of what they might do in subsequent work.

Group feedback can help indicate how the overall cohort performed and may offer observations and illustrations of typical strengths and challenges. While arguably not as helpful at the individual level, this type of feedback is quicker to compile and may help students better understand their own performance in relation to their peers. Group feedback is a useful mode of feedback in courses with very large cohorts and can be used effectively early on in a course when many students may encountering the same learning challenges.

Approaches to delivering and drafting feedback

Ways of framing feedback

A frequently used method of structuring written feedback is to combine positive and critical observations in a format which opens with a positive comment about the work, followed by area(s) that require correction or further development and finishing with another positive suggestion for future work if possible providing an illustrative example from the student's own work.

Ideally, feedback should draw explicitly upon marking criteria to demonstrate how these have or have not been addressed.

Modes of feedback

Written feedback:

Written feedback can take many forms including

- a few sentences or paragraphs at the end of an assignment
- handwritten or typed annotations on an assignment text or file
- a feedback sheet which combines a pro forma of tick box indicators and qualitative comments. (A common student view is that qualitative comments offer more guidance about how to develop their work. Nonetheless, a pro forma is one way to offer an overview of the assignment quickly. See example in Appendix II.)
- comments posted to an online text or space, such as a blog or an ePortfolio.

Spoken feedback:

Generally feedback is considered to be a written communication between teacher and student. However, it is possible to give oral feedback either face to face (to groups or individual) or delivered in real time using a web conferencing tool (such as *Skype*, *Blackboard, Collaborate*).

Oral asynchronous feedback can be provided using audio or video. For example, spoken feedback could be recorded using podcasts or screencasting software (such as *Camtasia*, for example) and uploaded to a VLE.

Automated feedback:

As discussed in the MCQ and the CBA methods section, online assessment offers opportunities for automated feedback. Assessment software can provide feedback for correct and incorrect MCQ responses. Advantages of this format include

- the instantaneous delivery of feedback
- time savings following the initial investment of creating the feedback
- the potential to offer partial feedback or hints to prompt students
- the opportunity to practice and receive feedback repeatedly.

Peer feedback:

Requiring peers to comment on each other's work can be a constructive way of increasing the availability of feedback without overburdening the course team. Peer feedback requires careful planning and training of students, but engaging in the process may help students develop their capacity to critically appraise others' work as well as learning from seeing how peers are approaching their work.

Issues to consider when designing feedback

Timing

- Short turnaround time: A short turnaround time makes feedback more meaningful to students and allows them to draw upon it for future work. A 2-week turnaround time is often recommended.
- Providing early formative feedback/feedforward: Providing some feedback early in a module helps students gauge their progress and understand what is expected and how they might develop their work. When planning module assessment it is useful to consider at what stage in the module formative feedback will be provided and what opportunities students will have to draw upon this feedback in future assignments.

Style of comments

- Constructive comments: Comments should be constructive and should help students understand what the strengths of the work are as well as areas for development.
- Writing in 2nd person: Markers should consider writing comments in 2nd person, so that they are addressed to the student. However, comments should be about the work rather than being a judgement of the person.

Vocabulary of feedback

- Ensuring shared understanding between tutors and students: research into student writing has revealed that even amongst high achieving students, there is often uncertainty about what particular terms used in feedback mean (Lea and Street, 1998[8]). It may be beneficial to ensure that there is a shared understanding between tutors and students about the terminology used. For example, do all students understand what is meant by 'argument' or 'being critical'? Clarity in feedback may be especially beneficial to those studying on an international programme given the highly diverse student body.

Stimulating dialogues with students

- Feedback as dialogue: Feedback can be used to establish a dialogue with students. For example, students can be asked to indicate at the point of submission of an assessment particular topics or areas on which they would like feedback.

- Tutors can ask students to indicate on subsequent assignments how they have responded to previous feedback.
- Students may be asked to indicate how they have taken into account formative feedback on an earlier draft in their final assessment.
- An assignment may require a student to offer a short assessment of their own work as part of the submission and this could form the basis of the marker's feedback.

Using a range of feedback approaches across a programme

- Incorporating a range of methods – such as peer, spoken or computer-based feedback – can increase the variety and scope of feedback across a programme.

Resources

HEA Feedback Toolkit (2013) (no author named)
heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/feedback_toolkit_whole1.pdf

8 Lea, M. & Street, B. (1998) Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach. Studies in Higher Education. 23 (2). 157–72.

Appendices

Appendix I: Additional resources

General resources

Journal articles and book chapters

Learning assessment in open, distance and flexible education, Special Issue of Open Praxis, Vol 5, No 3 (2013). **openpraxis.org/index.php/OpenPraxis/issue/view/5/showToc**

This issue of *Open Praxis* focuses on innovative ways of assessing student's performance in open, distance and flexible education.

Duhs, R. (2013). Assessment and the student experience. In C. B. Kandiko, M. Weyers (Eds.), The Global Student Experience: An International and Comparative Analysis. Abingdon: Routledge.

Duhs, R. (2010). 'Please no exams!' Assessment strategies for international students. Educational Developments, 11 (4), SEDA issue on Assessing International Students: **seda.ac.uk/resources/files/publications_123_Educational%20Developments%2011.4.pdf**

HEA Feedback Toolkit (2013) (no author named) **www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/feedback_toolkit_whole1.pdf**

Websites

The CPD4HE Assessment and Feedback Materials include a set of PowerPoint slides on assessment in higher education; a tutor's guide to these, which aims to help readers to use the slides in their own educational development contexts; a quiz on assessment; tutor's notes on the quiz, including answers; materials on diversifying assessment and giving feedback to students. The materials are now a few years old but are open educational resources which you can adapt to suit your purpose.

www.ceelbas.ac.uk/calt/support/cpd4he/resources/assessment

University College Dublin Teaching Toolkit has a section on assessment which includes links to a range of resources including academic staff talking on video about their approaches to assessment.

The toolkit: **ucdoer.ie/index.php/Teaching_Toolkit**

The assessment section: **www.ucd.ie/teaching/resources/assessment/**

Michigan State materials on experiential learning and linking assessment with learning outcomes. A ZOHO login (free) is needed in order to view some of the resources. There is an overview of the resource on this page: **msuglobal.com/learning-outcomes-assessment-toolkit/**

The 'Authentic assessment toolbox' from North Central College, Illinois includes examples of portfolio assessment and authentic assessment tasks in in different subject disciplines and also critiques 'traditional' assessment.

jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/whatisit.htm

This **University of Nottingham page on online assessment** includes examples from different courses offered by the university, many of them involving just small adjustments to practice.

nottingham.ac.uk/teaching/assessmentfeedback/onlineassessment/index.aspx

Also from Nottingham is this **video in which Chris Rust discusses assessment and feedback.**

nottingham.ac.uk/teaching/assessmentfeedback/index.aspx

Specific assessment topics: links and resources

Annotated bibliography

guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography

writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/annotated-bibliography

owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/

Example marking rubric: library.njit.edu/researchhelpdesk/instruction/Annotated__Bibliography_grading_rubric.pdf

MCQs and Computer based assessment

Bull, J. & McKenna, C. (2004) Blueprint for Computer-assisted Assessment. London: Routledge.

Posters

Cook (no date) 'Case study – poster session assessment'
www.sddu.leeds.ac.uk/casestudies/casestudy.php?ID=120

This case study describes the introduction of posters as an assessment method in the study of German modernity at the University of Leeds.

Coyle, A. (2014) 'Group posters and pinboards with Padlet.'
www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/casestudies/Group+Posters+and+Pinboards+with+Padlet

This case study describes the use of Padlet, (a free, digital 'pinboard tool') to create posters with groups of online, distance learners in veterinary medicine at the University of Edinburgh. The webpage includes a presentation on the rationale for using posters, guidance given to students and an example of a group poster.

O'Neill, G. and Jennings, D. (2012) 'The use of posters for assessment: a guide for staff'
www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCDTLA0039.pdf

This excellent, detailed guide from University College Dublin offers comprehensive support for students in the rationale, design, formatting and production of posters. It also describes different approaches to developing assessment criteria, addresses accessibility and outlines methods of using posters for peer working.

Oral presentations

This video from University of New South Wales describes use of Pecha-kucha presentations (20 slides for 20 seconds) for assessment: teaching.unsw.edu.au/oral-presentations

This document from the University of Exeter pre-dates some of the technologies we now use for online communication but it includes tips on oral presentations for distance learning students. Some of these would still be useful. education.exeter.ac.uk/dll/studyskills/oral_presentation.pdf

Open University – assessing oral presentations in distance education – oro.open.ac.uk/41291/

Short answer questions

Example marking rubrics: ar.cetl.hku.hk/am_saq.htm#6

Blogs

Guidance given to Education students from Queen's University Belfast who were to be assessed on their blog during a placement abroad. The document also includes short grade descriptors, which give some indication of the standard expected.

stran.ac.uk/mods/int/outgoing/BlogCriteria.pdf

This is an example of a marking rubric for assessing blogs:

teaching.unsw.edu.au/assessing-blogs#

Appendix II: formative feedback cover sheet

Undergraduate Formative Essay Cover Sheet

Department of .....

Candidate name:	Course & Class Teacher:	
Essay question:		

Mark Range	Understanding of topic/question	Use of literature	Critical Analysis	Structure of argument and presentation	Conclusion
70-100%	Excellent understanding and command of topic and engagement with the question	Outstanding use of extensive sources; evidence of questioning approach towards literature	Exceptional level of insight, originality and sophistication; incisive critical analysis of salient issues	Argument(s) logically structured and coherent with outstanding clarity; excellent referencing	Highly persuasive summary with exceptional integration of main points; convincingly draws out implications for theory or practice
60-69%	Good knowledge and understanding of material directly relevant to question	Good use of wide-ranging sources	High level of insight and clear evidence of independent thinking	Argument(s) logically structured clearly reasoned; coherent and intelligent presentation of ideas; excellent referencing	Cogent and persuasive summary which covers key points; draws out wider implications
50-59%	Some broad-based understanding of issues relevant to question	Competent application of standard / narrow literature to support arguments	More heavily dependent on description than on independent analysis	Argument(s) contain inconsistencies, irrelevant points and unsubstantiated claims; presentation and referencing may contain inaccuracies	Draws together main points as they relate to question
40-49%	Limited understanding of question and partial familiarity with issues raised by it	Makes reference to some literature but may be unsupportive or indiscriminately applied	No evidence of analysis and no critical engagement	No structure or argument at all	No conclusion presented
20-39%	Little understanding of the question and poor grasp of material	Almost entirely based on lecture material, very little evidence of reading	Very weak or ill-conceived analysis with little or no critical engagement	Argument(s) poorly structured, under-developed and/or unfinished	Very poorly specified conclusion; largely irrelevant to question
0-19%	Almost no sign of understanding; fails to address question	No significant or relevant use of the literature	No evidence of analysis and no critical engagement	No structure or argument at all	No conclusion presented
Comments/Recommendations for future improvement:				**Average mark range overall**	

Note: (1) the sections are not equally weighted and only provide a relative qualitative assessment of your performance.


University of London International Programmes

For further information on the range of programmes we offer, please visit our website or contact us at:

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londoninternational.ac.uk/flickr

londoninternational.ac.uk/blog

Assessment Toolkit