

Principles of Assessment

The University is built upon principles of widening participation and social justice, and it is on these foundations that our approach to assessment is based. We support our students to be actively engaged in their own learning, and our approach is to remove barriers and to be transparent. We work with our students to improve their assessment literacy, so they understand the purpose of assessment and against what standards they are being assessed. Our programmes develop students who are independent and ready for the workplace through our use of authentic assessment.

This overarching view of assessment has informed our principles of assessment, which are key considerations in the development of new programmes and the way students are assessed at the University.

1 Learning and assessment should be integrated and fully aligned to learning outcomes

The design of assessment should be aligned with the design of the overall curriculum, the programme aims and learning outcomes. Individual assessment strategies for modules should not be decided in isolation. Assessment should be considered holistically as part of the design process, to give a programme-level view of assessment and scaffold learning across the different levels of study, as appropriate to the discipline. Learning and assessment should be fully integrated and aligned.

2 Assessment forms should be varied

Assessment types that are appropriate in demonstrating learning outcomes should be employed. Where possible, different forms of assessment should be included in each programme to enable students to demonstrate their learning in a number of ways, using contextualised approaches for learning. Assessment should also be appropriate to the level of study and allow students to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes.

3 Assessment should be authentic

Authentic assessments (that is assessment that requires students to apply competencies, knowledge or skills as they would in professional life and which will develop employability and transferable skills) should be included in all programmes of study. The assessment should connect to the discipline, be of the appropriate level of study and demonstrate real-world skills.

4 Students should understand the assessment process

Programmes, modules and assessment should be designed to enable students to understand the required standards. Students should be engaged in dialogue to understand what is required from, and entailed in, the assessment process: the what, why, when and how of their assessments. This understanding has a positive impact on a student's confidence and motivation.

5 Assessment should be in partnership with students

Programmes should encourage student engagement with assessment, for example in developing and applying assessment criteria. This promotes understanding of how they will be assessed and what learning outcomes the assessment is designed to demonstrate. Self-assessment and peer assessment can also engage students in the production and process of assessment.

6 Assessment should be balanced across the programme of study

Students should undertake appropriate assessment tasks in each level of study. Assessment tasks should be designed to build on and develop previous skills and knowledge and develop these for the next level of study.

7 Assessment should be transparent, valid and reliable

Successful completion of assessments enables students to demonstrate that they have achieved all learning outcomes by the end of the programme. Information on all assessments should be explicit, accurate and transparent and consistent processes for setting, marking, moderating and external scrutiny of assessments should be in place.

8 There should be opportunities for formative assessment in all programmes

Formative assessment and varied forms of formative feedback should be clearly connected to associated summative assessments. Engagement with regular formative activities and academic feedback help to deepen student understanding, support their development as a learner and help them know how they are doing and how they can improve. Formative assessment also positively impacts on a student's confidence and motivation for summative assessment processes.

9 Assessment types should be inclusive, equitable and sufficiently demanding

Assessments should not disadvantage any group or individuals, enabling students to demonstrate the highest level of attainment of which they are capable, whilst maintaining academic standards.

10 Assessment should be managed and manageable

The scheduling and amount of assessment should enable students to demonstrate the highest level of attainment with regard for not overloading both staff and students. Clustering of assessment should be minimised as far as possible, and assessment should not measure the same skills and knowledge repeatedly. Modules should not normally have more than two items of assessment, but it may be appropriate for the module to include fewer or more than two points of assessment.

11 Assessment should be monitored and evaluated

Assessment should be regularly reviewed in line with University quality assurance and enhancement processes, and monitored to ensure currency, fairness, parity and quality. Student performance should be analysed and evaluated regularly to ensure no inadvertent disadvantaging of groups or individuals.

Associated links:	[webpage addressed in full]
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