

Rethinking assessment



What?	How?	Why?
Check assessed needs of each cohort	Find the information detailing individual or modified assessment requirements on Unit-e and in Students' Support Documents.	Meets legal requirements and UK Quality Code for higher education (QAA 2010).
Enhance learners' assessment literacy	Give clear marking criteria and SMART learning outcomes ⁱ ; provide opportunities for practice and prior support, e.g. on essay structure. Signpost Writing Café and Learning Development. Timetable peer assessment / peer support sessions, e.g. activities which involve learners assessing each other's or example pieces of work using the official marking criteria.	Helps learners to understand the process of assessment and the expected standards. Reduces anxiety of not knowing what exactly is expected. Promotes shared understanding, learning from each other, and peer support.
Allow flexibility in student presentations	Give options related to audience, venue, medium, format: e.g. live or recorded sessions; talking head video or screencast presentations; presenting to tutor(s) only or presenting to tutor(s) and peers.	Future work roles may involve recorded or online presentations as much as (if not more than) to large or medium-size audiences. Some groups of learners will choose this if they lack confidence or fear negativity from peer groups.
Enable students to have choice in specifics of coursework	Give as much opportunity for learner engagement in the specifics as feasible: such as choice of topic or format of report, co-designing assessment and/or marking criteria. Break complex tasks into manageable chunks, possibly with interim deadlines, and opportunities for formative feedback.	Student engagement in assessed coursework design leads to better understanding of what is required and ultimately to improved grades: most learners have preferred aspects of any module or theme and will work more on those which they are enthusiastic about.
Ensure fairness in group work	Provide group members with the opportunity to give feedback on peer input for assessed group work.	Not all learners feel confident to speak up about group members who do not do their fair share of work.

What?	How?	Why?
Provide a range of exam formats	<p>Consider different options for delivery, e.g. open book exams, seen exams.</p> <p>Organise special provision for those with declared needs as recorded on Unit-e: such as extra time, or alternative to exam.</p>	<p>Extra time is needed for reading and writing for many assessed conditions.</p> <p>Many learning outcomes are not related to ability to memorise and recall; a major aspect of many traditional exams.</p>
Ensure assignments are spread evenly	<p>Liaise with all module leads and tutors, including the personal tutors, to schedule even spread of formative and summative submission dates across the year.</p> <p>Consider involving student representatives in your planning.</p>	<p>Assignments bunched together are a leading source of anxiety and distress to students.</p> <p>Allows staff and students to plan the year more effectively and avoid blockages.</p>

Even if part of the assessment is something that is timed, there are always ways that you can get round it. Some of the faculties will keep the [assignment] document they've [students] got to work on with the faculty staff and the student turns up and it's clocked in and it's clocked out and then if they're having an episode [...], they go away and it's locked. They don't take it, then they come back and they start again when they're more comfortable. So they still have the time aspect.

I'd like to see a bit more timetabling [scheduling] of assignments etc. [...] I would like them [tutors] to say, "That's what you've got, that's the end date. On this date here I want you to have done that and hand that in and on this date here I want you to do that [...]" you've got small achievable chunks to the end point.

Further information:

<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/teaching-and-learning/inclusivity>

<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/services/learning-gateway/disability-and-dyslexia>

QAA, 2010, Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. Section 3: Disabled students

QAA, 2012, UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality, Chapter B3: Learning and teaching

QAA, 2013, UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality, Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning

ⁱ <http://explaining.ucf.edu/registered-students/tips-for-success/writing-smart-learning-objectives/195>