

What is Assessment?

“Assessment lies at the heart of the learning experience” JISC, 2010, p.5

With increasing numbers of learners and practitioners engaging with technology, it is an obvious step to examine how this could be harnessed for assessment and feedback. In fact, this is already taking place and throughout this resource you will find links to case studies and examples of how assessment and feedback has been supported by taking advantage of the benefits of technology. It is important to note that assessment is often thought of as either summative (assessment of learning) or formative (assessment for learning) and these terms will be used throughout this resource.

“How learners are assessed shapes their understanding of the curriculum and determines their ability to progress” JISC, 2010, p.5

Formative assessment

The aim of formative assessment is to monitor the progress of student learning within a module and to generate feedback that can be used by lecturers to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. Formative assessment should be “low stakes” and designed to help students develop as learners by identifying strengths and weaknesses as a developmental process with no grade formally associated with the work. Specifically, formative assessment:

- helps students identify their strengths/weaknesses and understand specific areas that require further work;
- informs the next steps in instruction including any requirements for additional learning;
- Provides important information for lecturers in terms of learning and academic progress.

Examples of formative assessment include:

- A mind map that demonstrates understanding of a topic;
- A plan for development into the summative piece;
- Submission of a research proposal;
- A summary of the main points of a lecture;
- A short quiz.

Summative assessment

The purpose of summative assessment is to evaluate the students' learning, via established standards and assessment criteria, to determine whether and to what extent they have attained defined module learning outcomes. Summative assessment is inherently "high stakes" as outcomes are formally recorded and used to determine module, stage and programme outcomes in defined awards. Summative assessment is subject to formal quality assurance processes relevant to the context of study.

Examples of summative assessment include:

- Formal examination or test in controlled conditions;
- Essay or Report
- Portfolio
- Dissertation
- Presentation (may be peer-assessed and/or tutor-assessed)
- Performance (e.g. musical or dramatic)
- Oral examination or Viva (e.g. foreign language speaking skills) Check out the following Ideas Factory post for more information: [Assessment methods: an inventory of contemporary approaches.](#)

Please note that full details of the University of Derby's Academic Regulations governing assessment for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes can be accessed on the Academic Regulations website.

References

Ferrell, G (2013) Dialogue and change: an update on key themes from the JISC

Assessment and Feedback programme

Ferrell, G (2012) A view of the Assessment and Feedback Landscape: baseline analysis of policy and practice from the JISC Assessment and Feedback programme. <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/marked-improvement> (accessed 22 Nov 2017).

JISC. (2010) Effective Assessment in a Digital Age: A guide to technology-enhanced assessment and feedback [online], Bristol, HEFCE. Available from www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/elearning/digiassass_eada.pdf (accessed 19 Nov 2014).

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