Institutional Assessment Strategy (June 2021)

Vision

Assessment at Leeds will be fair, inclusive and authentic and designed to support learning. Using digital technologies to deliver assessment and feedback practices and processes, we will ensure that assessment upholds academic standards and integrity whilst providing students with appropriate opportunities to demonstrate their potential and achievement.

Our assessment principles (our foundational commitments that underpin the strategy)

- Assessment will enable and support learning. It is key to the overall student experience and should encourage students to become reflexive learners, providing them with multiple opportunities to demonstrate, consolidate and evaluate their personal values, learning and skill development at programme level.
- Our assessment practices will be underpinned by appropriate disciplinary pedagogies and will reflect our commitment to student-centred education.
- Assessment will be designed and delivered in a way that is transparent, fair and compassionate and acknowledges the lived experience of all staff and students involved.
- Assessment will be accessible and inclusive for all students.
- Assessment will be digital by default. We will make optimal use of digital platforms to support diversity, inclusivity and to improve efficiency.
- Assessment will be authentic, aligned to the expectations of academic disciplines, professional bodies, employers and other relevant organisations and will promote the development of learning alongside technical and transferable skills.
- Assessment will form an integral part of programme design. Assessment will flow from well-designed programme learning outcomes.
- Staff and students will be partners in assessment and will have a shared understanding of the purpose of assessment and feedback to support learning.
- Our assessment processes and practices will embed a shared understanding and commitment to academic integrity, and will ensure that standards and the integrity of the Leeds degree are upheld.

Objectives

1.0 To ensure our assessment practices are designed to support learning and progression using an evidence-based approach;

- To consider assessment at programme level in the first instance, making links between programme level learning outcomes and assessment explicit.
- To improve the balance between formative and summative assessment and to provide students more opportunity to reflect and act on feedback in a timely manner.

- To position assessment as a tool for reflexive learning as well as a measure of learning.
- To provide opportunities for students to demonstrate how they have met assessment criteria at multiple points within a programme.
- To introduce opportunities for synoptic assessment.
- To clearly articulate what students need to do within individual assessments and improve how assessment criteria are developed, articulated and applied.

2.0 To involve staff and students in the development of an assessment culture which is fair, inclusive and authentic;

- To position students as partners in assessment, involving them in shaping assessment that is relevant and gives them the best opportunities to show how they have met their learning objectives in addition to surfacing the ways in which that learning prepares them for their futures.
- To ensure assessment is inclusive by design.
- To improve assessment literacy across the institution for all staff and students.
- To move away from closed book, knowledge-recall examinations and towards relevant assessment which focuses on the application of both skills and knowledge.
- To support students in the surfacing and articulation of skills which are assessed throughout their programme of study.
- To update our approach to assessment using the latest pedagogical research.
- To develop opportunities for staff training and development for improving assessment practices.

3.0 To embed digital technologies in our assessment and feedback practices and processes;

- To make our approach to the whole assessment cycle (including, delivery, submission, marking, feedback, marks processing and examinations) digital by default.
- To establish the most effective digital platforms, administration and training for staff and students to ensure that assessment and feedback can be digital by default.
- To utilise approved digital tools that ensure data is captured, stored and shared in a consistent manner reducing the need to store data locally and thereby preserving the integrity and accuracy of assessment data.
- To provide high quality training and development for staff and students to support the implementation of digital pedagogies for assessment and feedback, drawing on sector developments.
- To involve staff and students in reviewing the digital technologies deployed and sharing effective practices.
- To establish clear principles and guidance for Online Time Limited Assessments and monitor the implementation of these.
- To capitalise on available technologies that support students' understanding of and commitment to academic integrity.

4.0 To develop effective operational processes for assessment to improve consistency, maximise efficiency and ensure standards.

- To establish a shared understanding amongst both students and staff of the purpose and approach to different assessment methods used at the University.
- To ensure that assessment strategies at the level of the programme are clear and coherent, seeking opportunities to reduce workload associated with summative assessment for students and staff and to simplify operations where possible.
- To adopt standard, consistent, institutional-wide end-to-end assessment processes with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for implementation that deliver an equitable student experience.
- To develop a single institutional code of practice for assessment.
- To improve the experience of assessment for students through effective assessment design, with an aim to reduce the need for (and administration of) resits and mitigating circumstances.
- To address issues around academic integrity through better training, improved digital technologies and appropriate assessment design.
- To ensure that assessment and marking are appropriately calibrated and in line with sector frameworks and benchmarks.
- To ensure that the University's regulatory frameworks are articulated in a clear and accessible manner.