

Leeds Expectations for Assessment and Feedback: Guidance



Assessment Strategy Group
University of Leeds
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How can you think about evidencing the Expectations?

- Although everyone has different roles and experience relating to assessment and feedback, you can all help to evidence the Leeds Expectations. Some staff, such as Directors of Student Education, have a formal responsibility for assessment and feedback in a school, accountable to the Head of School and Pro-Dean for Student Education.
- The table on the next page might help you identify who might need to evidence meeting the Expectations, how this might be done, and where this might be done.
- Schools are not limited to using the suggestions in the table. These are prompts to help you think about how to approach your assessment work and the assessment culture within your own discipline area or school.



How might staff engage with LEAF?

| Who might need to evidence the LEAF? | How might this be done? | Where might this be done? | Which guidance questions might help? |
|---|---|--|--|
| All staff (Academic and SES) | Talk to each other and your students about assessment | As part of your normal work | All of them. |
| Pro-Deans for Student Education | Assessment culture and leadership Advice and support/Sector information | Taught Student Education Board Standards Steering Group Assessment Strategy Group Faculty Assessment and Standards Group Programme Approval Groups | 1.1 to 1.4, 3.1 to 3.3, 4.1 to 4.6, 5.1 to 5.5 |
| Directors of Student Education | School assessment regimes / assessment criteria / assessment culture Assessment design, development and review | STSECs and Annual School Reviews Programme Approval Groups Communication with students about assessment Codes of Practice on Assessment (CoPA) | 1.1 to 1.6, 2.1 to 2.3, 3.1 to 3.3, 4.1 to 4.6, 5.1 to 5.6, 6.1, 7.1, 7.3 |
| Student Education Service staff involved with assessment | In conjunction with the Director of Student Education in a range of forums | During operational considerations for assessment setting, marking, CoPA preparation | This will depend on your role. Discuss with your DSE or SES manager. |
| School Assessment Lead and School Academic Integrity Lead | School assessment regimes / assessment criteria / assessment culture Assessment design, development and review | STSECs and Annual School Reviews CoPAs | All of them |
| Programme leaders | Programme Assessment overviews Assessment design, development and review | Programme team meetings / programme reviews Programme Approval Groups | 1.1 to 1.6, 2.1 to 2.3, 3.1 to 3.3, 4.2 to 4.6, 5.3 to 5.6, 6.1 to 6.5, 7.1 to 7.3 |
| Module Leaders | Module assessment overviews Assessment design, development and review | Module team meetings / Module evaluations Guidance to students on assessment and feedback provided to students | 1.1 to 1.4, 2.1 to 2.3, 3.1 to 3.3, 4.2 to 4.6, 5.3 to 5.6, 6.1 to 6.3, 7.1, 7.2 |
| Assessor or marker | Marking and use of criteria Assessment feedback to students | Individual assessment tasks Guidance to students on assessment and feedback provided to students | 2.1, 2.2, 4.1 to 4.6, 5.4, 6.1 to 6.9 |
| University Leadership | Resources, training and time | Taught Student Education Board | 5.1, 5.5 |

There are many other contributors to the quality and success of assessment and feedback at the University, including our students. The guidance here suggests you consider questions that will help start discussions to support the development of your assessment strategies to evidence meeting the Leeds Expectations for Assessment and Feedback (LEAF). **This is not a definitive list and colleagues should consider the guidance in full and not feel limited to the suggested questions highlighted above.**

Attributes: the characteristics that all of our assessment and feedback share.

These are the 7 Attributes at the University of Leeds.

- *Validity, Inclusivity and Sensitivity;*
- *Reliability;*
- *Relevance/Applicability;*
- *Transparency;*
- *Readiness;*
- *Informative;*
- *Partnership*

1. Validity, Inclusivity and Sensitivity:

Validity, Inclusivity and Sensitivity means that your assessment should serve to demonstrate achievement or otherwise of learning outcomes.

Validity should be differentiated as assessment for learning and assessment of learning, plus in each case be demonstrably linked with learning outcomes.

Assessment must be sensitive to different learning needs, inclusive, culturally sensitive and must be able to differentiate between levels of achievement. In some circumstances, assessment may need to be tailored or personal to the student.

Assessment should actively promote good academic practice and integrity.

What questions could you ask to evidence this Attribute?

1.1. Have you mapped all your (formative and summative) assessment points to learning outcomes for modules, levels and programmes? A mapping template is appended to the Guidance which you might find helpful.

You could consider the following:

1.1.1. What demonstrates to you that all your assessment points validly address the learning outcomes?

1.1.2. On what grounds can you make reasoned decisions about unnecessary assessment?

1.1.3. And can you be certain that all programme learning outcomes are actually tested as appropriate at each level of the programme(s)?

1.2. What variety of assessment is there across the programme such that different learning needs can be met and achievement of different learning outcomes demonstrated?

1.3. What mechanisms and processes do you have in place to examine the range of marks for different assessments tasks (not just overall module marks) to consider the degree to which they differentiate levels of achievement against the LOs?

1.4. Does your assessment allow adjustments to accommodate Specific Learning Disabilities?

1.4.1. When approving assessment and feedback activity for a module or programme, how do you consider inclusive assessment practices?

1.5. Has your School considered the impact of moving to the 0-100 marking scale?

Have you considered the following?

1.5.1. Will this be categorical, linear or both?

1.5.2. Has it affected your practice and if so, how?

1.5.3. Are all staff aware of and prepared for the change?

1.6. Has your School considered how within its assessment regime, the risks of plagiarism or other malpractice might be minimised?

Have you considered the following?

1.6.1. Can you alter coursework requirements each year to reduce the risks of sharing of work from year to year?

1.6.2. Could you include reflective components in coursework to encourage students to take individual responsibility for the assignments they submit?

2. Reliability

Reliability means that your assessment must be replicable and rigorous.

Reliable assessments should be differentiated as assessment for learning and assessment of learning but in each case be demonstrably linked with learning outcomes.

What questions could you ask to evidence this Attribute?

2.1. Are several colleagues involved in assessment for a given module?

Have you considered the following?

2.1.1. How do you collectively agree within the module on what the assessment task actually asks of students?

2.1.2. Do you collectively define and agree on the assessment criteria for those assessments?

2.1.3. If you use School generic criteria, do you collectively consider those within the module to agree on their meaning for a given assessment task?

2.2. What process(es) does your School deploy to try to standardise (calibrate) how assessors in the School approach assessment?

2.3. Do you use the same assessments from one year to the next and in this way manage replicability?

Have you considered the following?

2.3.1. Do you amend or reformulate your assessments completely?

2.3.2. Do you check that an assessment in one year is of a similar level of difficulty to that used in the following year?

2.3.3. How do you actively check that a 'new' form of assessment actually tests the learning outcomes in question?

3. Relevant/Applicable

Relevant/Applicable means that assessment should where realistically possible, resemble the sorts of task that might be required of a flexible, reflective and adaptable graduate in the discipline.

This clearly will depend on level and readiness, but the aim should be that at least towards the end of a programme of study, assessment should be sufficiently authentic to prepare students for [graduate] employment, further study or research.

What questions could you ask to evidence this Attribute?

- 3.1. As learning outcomes develop over the course of a programme of study, do your forms of assessment remain largely the same, but with different expectations (i.e. the criteria change, and this is explicit in the published criteria)

- 3.2. Does the range of assessments diversify or develop in some other way to align with the learning outcomes?

- 3.3. Towards the end of the programme, do at least some of your school's assessments resemble the sort of activities that your graduates might encounter when in employment or embarking on further study?

You could consider the following:

- 3.3.1. Do you have other means for preparing them for the types of task your graduates might encounter after graduation and how do you do this?
- 3.3.2. If you do not have other means of preparation, what plans do you have to develop these?
- 3.3.3. Do you need any additional support and how could you get this?

4. Transparency

Transparency means that assessment tasks must be understood by students and staff.

Assessment tasks must align with collectively agreed and shared assessment criteria, which should relate explicitly to learning outcomes, and where possible be specific to the assessment tasks set.

What questions could you ask to evidence this Attribute?

4.1. Does your School have published assessment criteria for all modules or assessment tasks?

Have you considered the following?

4.1.1. How specific to particular forms of assessment are they? For example, you might have generic criteria for essay work, or for practical work.

4.1.2. Do you have different criteria for each of the different forms of assessment you deploy?

4.2. Do you go further and generate criteria for each individual component of assessment (i.e. move away from generic criteria)?

Have you considered the following?

4.2.1. How does the assessment criteria develop/change for the different levels of a programme and/or for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students?

4.3. How do you generate your criteria?

When generating your criteria you could discuss the following:

4.3.1. Do the criteria roll over from one session to the next?

4.3.2. Do you have some process in place to ensure that they are understood by assessors?

4.3.3. How do new staff members engage with the assessment criteria?

4.3.4. How do you involve students in the development of new or existing criteria to help understanding of terms and features you wish to see as students undertake assessment?

4.4. If you are generating new criteria, what process do you have in place for that activity?

4.5. How do you ensure that students understand the assessment criteria your School uses for each assessment task?

4.6. What means do you have to provide you with confidence that assessors remain aligned with the expectations you set for assessments when actually undertaking the marking?

5. Readiness

Readiness means that assessors (be they academic, PGR, or external assessors) should be appropriately trained, and students should be appropriately inducted in order to be prepared for, and confident within, the assessment culture at the University of Leeds.

Readiness extends to both assessment formats (e.g. essays, examinations, etc.) and to the delivery tools to support such formats, such as e-assessment.

Training should consider calibration, benchmarking and standard-setting where appropriate.

What questions could you ask to evidence this Attribute?

- 5.1. Do all new staff and PGRs involved in teaching undergo some form of preparatory training, specifically focused on assessment and feedback, before undertaking assessment in your School?

- 5.2. If the School introduces a new form of assessment, do all those likely to be involved in using this form of assessment undertake some form of training or exercise in order to make them confident in assessing this new task?

- 5.3. How do you prepare your students for the style, language, format and structure of assessments they'll encounter as part of their programme of study in your School?

- 5.4. What processes does your School deploy to try to standardise (calibrate) how assessors in the School approach assessment?

- 5.5. Do you provide training for assessors and students on how to engage with new assessment tools?

- 5.6. How do you check that assessment practice with such tools is consistent with practice with more traditional forms of assessment and if students are satisfied?

6. Informative

Informative means that assessment should lead to feedback that is useful to students and assessors.

Informative assessment should lead to feedback that supports student learning (where they are now) and promote student achievement (how to progress).

Informative assessment should lead to feedback that is useful to assessors to ensure alignment with grades or marks, and possibly to other stakeholders (e.g. employers).

What questions could you ask to evidence this Attribute?

- 6.1. What form does feedback you provide typically take?

- 6.2. Do you deliver quick feedback in class or individually in longer sessions, perhaps via personal tutorials?

- 6.3. If you use electronic approaches to provide feedback (e.g. Turnitin Feedback Studio), do you or your colleagues rely on the standard feedback 'libraries' or personalise the feedback?

- 6.4. If you use cover sheets, is there space for written comments, or do you rely on tick boxes to indicate if a particular feature is present or absent, for example, and through this indicate alignment with assessment criteria?

- 6.5. When providing feedback on assessed work, do you review your feedback to check that it is consistent with the mark you feel is appropriate?

- 6.6. When involved in second or check marking, does your School review the feedback provided (quality and quantity) to try to ensure that feedback is useful for your students and consistent across a cohort?

- 6.7. When providing feedback, do you use marks such as X, ?, a tick, or brief comments, such as "good" or "needs more elaboration"?

Have you considered the following?

- 6.7.1. By what other means do you explain to your students what these marks/comments mean?
- 6.7.2. Do you explain to your students why they are used in each case?

- 6.8. Do you and your colleagues remind yourselves of what the task was aimed at demonstrating before embarking on the marking process, to try to ensure that feedback is aligned with the task demands as well as the set criteria?

- 6.9. Do you and your colleagues, when providing feedback try to both indicate what was done well, and what might have been improved, and in the latter case, how such improvement might have been achieved?

6.10. Is it your sense, or that of your colleagues, that sometimes students elect not to engage with feedback?

6.10.1. Have you attempted to discover why this might be and to address this issue?

7. Partnership

Partnership means that assessment and feedback is a joint activity between students and staff. Assessment should serve purposes for both students and staff in maintaining and strengthening standards, confidence, and rigour. Peer- and self-assessment are valuable tools to be considered.

What questions could you ask to evidence this Attribute?

- 7.1. Have you considered using peer- and self-assessment approaches?

- 7.2. Do you have opportunities within your programmes for students to discuss with staff or PGRs who teach, the assessment regime generally within the programme?

- 7.3. When you review the feedback (comments) that students provide in response to questions or items specific to Assessment and Feedback in the Programme or National Student surveys or module evaluations, are the comments students provide meaningful to you?

Do you also consider the following?

- 7.3.1. Can you see why students might have commented as they did?
- 7.3.2. Have you adjusted your approach accordingly and if not, what is the reason?
- 7.3.3. Have you informed students how their feedback has been used to make further improvements?

What can you do now?

The aim of the reflective questions within this guidance document is to try to assist you and your colleagues in thinking about rationalising and harmonising your assessment structures, and to enhance and build confidence in doing so – for you and ultimately your students.

- You and your colleagues should discuss the questions within your school and consider how you might demonstrate your answers to someone from outside your discipline.
- The Guidance is only a starting document and your views are needed to fully develop this. Please email your comments, about the areas you think should be further developed and supported, to gat@leeds.ac.uk. These will be collated and considered by the Assessment Strategy Group.

How can the Assessment Strategy Group help?

Members of the University's Assessment Strategy Group are always willing to come to schools to discuss the *Leeds Expectations for Assessment and Feedback* and to try to provide more contextualised guidance.

- Ask your Pro-Dean for Student Education or Director of Student Education for more advice on how the Group could support you in using this guidance.
- Alternatively, you can contact the Group directly by emailing gat@leeds.ac.uk

