UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Leeds Expectations for Assessment and Feedback (LEAF)

Implementation Activities for Each Attribute

Feedback received following the publication of the LEAF Guidance, the assessment mapping exercise, the LEAF implementation workshops conducted thus far, and discussion with the Assessment Functional Managers, has indicated that a list of more focused potential implementation activities or actions would be useful as schools consider and progress LEAF implementation.

Schools will appreciate why Assessment Strategy Group, Standards Steering Group, and Taught Student Education Board mandated assessment mapping as the first stage in progressing towards LEAF implementation. It is acknowledged that some actions represent new activity; this demonstrates the value of assessment mapping and some subsequent assessment rationalisation/reduction in order to release time in which new activity might be performed.

Implementation activities should be considered and agreed through School Taught Student Education Committees (STSECs). Changes to assessment criteria should be approved as part of the approval process for the Code of Practice on Assessment (CoPA) through an appropriate sub-group of Faculty Taught Student Education Committees (FTSECs). It is recommended that implementation activities be recorded on the LEAF Implementation Tool to support straightforward reporting through review processes. This more directive guidance assumes that schools remain satisfied that the programme and module learning outcomes (LOs) adequately describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be demonstrated by students, and therefore none of the activities refer to amendment of LOs, though it is acknowledged that in certain cases, schools may wish to adjust LOs in addition to their assessment and feedback structures. In such circumstances, schools would need to have amended programme and module LOs approved by a faculty Programme Approval Group (PAG).

These are the 7 LEAF Attributes at the University of Leeds.

The following sections set out the definition of each of the Attributes (in italics), then provide a set of action options for you to consider as potential mechanisms by which to demonstrate that the elements of the Attribute are met. In some instances, you would potentially undertake all the activities provided, but elsewhere, it may be sufficient to apply only a number of the options available to you. The list is not exhaustive, and some actions may require modification to accommodate particular forms of assessment and may represent new activity. Some actions apply to more than one attribute (e.g. potential actions under Reliability may also apply under Transparency or Readiness); cross-referencing between Attributes is provided to assist schools.

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.

NB: The University's programmes of study rely in criteria-referenced assessment; consideration must be given both to assessment structures and the criteria associated with those assessment.

1. Validity

a. Map all assessments, formative and summative, to module LOs.

b. Map all module LOs to programme level LOs.

c. Ensure that final year programme LOs capture sufficiently the LOs from preceding years.

d. Check and ensure that assessment criteria reflect the nature of the tasks being asked of students.

e. Check that what is required for students to pass any given assessment is aligned appropriately with the pass mark on assessment criteria (standard-setting).

f. Check if the tasks set assess the LOs specified in the module (this should routinely be performed as part of STSEC or PAG approval).

g. Seek confirmation from external examiners that the identified alignment between assessments and LOs is appropriate and consistent with external reference points such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statements or PSRB requirements.

2. Inclusivity

a. Make sure that you have a variety of assessment formats in each level. It may be helpful to refer to *A Compendium of Assessment Techniques in Higher Education: From Students' Perspective and* the University's Institutional Standards for Inclusive Learning and Teaching (particularly Baseline Standard 3) **(see Readiness 2c to 2g).**

b. Check that assessment criteria and task briefings for students do not explicitly or implicitly include criteria associated with English language fluency when demonstration of LOs does not require such fluency for the tasks in question.

c. When agreeing on assessments for modules at STSECs, routinely refer to the University's Baseline Standards (particularly Baseline Standards 1 and 3) to explore options for improving inclusivity.

d. Consider offering a choice of assessment formats to students within a module, to reduce the need for reasonable adjustments.

e. When approving module assessments at STSECs, approve an alternative format for those for whom the typical assessment might be challenging in the context of most Assessments of Needs (AoN). For example, if the typical assessment is a 3-hour exam, which, when coupled with an AoN recommending an additional 15 minutes per hour, would lead to an exam of 3 hours, 45 minutes duration, explore the possibility of demonstration of LOs for such students through alternative means.

f. When new assessment structures are being contemplated, co-create such structures with students, to help enhance inclusivity. You may go further and use student-designed assessment, though in such circumstances co-creation of assessment criteria and establishment of the passing standard will be essential **(see Relevant/Applicable: Authenticity 2c)**.

3. Sensitivity

a. Check that each module has a credible range of marks in the context of that module's assessment structures; this may mean marks ranging from fail to first/distinction, or a narrower range, but needs to be judged contextually to reflect the module's content, delivery and type(s) of assessment.

b. Use statistical means and standard deviations at Assessment Boards to assess the degree to which modules are sensitive to levels of achievement.

c. If ranges are too narrow (i.e. small standard deviations) examine why this is; is the assessment too challenging (range of marks near the bottom of the scale) or not challenging enough (mark range near the top of the scale) or are they clustered around a mean in the high 50s/low 60s (either assessment or marking is not sensitive)?

d. If marks are too closely clustered, examine assessment criteria and add further differentiation, and/or examine the assessment (e.g. MCQs need adjustment to increase sensitivity).

e. Check that assessors are actually using the assessment criteria, and not relying simply on individual judgement, as both criteria and task demands may be appropriate, but assessment behaviour may not reflect those criteria/task requirements.

f. Check that the ranges of marks do not show systematic differential attainment, by, for example, those students registered with disabilities, those from black and other minority ethnic groupings, or those admitted through Access to Leeds, or otherwise meeting widening participation criteria, to demonstrate that your assessment is sensitive to all learning needs.

4. Academic Integrity

a. Consider inclusion of a reflective component in written coursework to ensure personal involvement by students.

b. Make sure that assessments change from year to year, to avoid potential risks of transmission across years. Schools are advised to determine locally the nature of the changes required (e.g. totally different teaching and assessment activity vs different assessments vs different assessment elements, such as data).

c. Re-emphasise in each assessment brief and module handbook/Minerva module template or guide the importance of academic integrity.

d. If possible, ensure that all students have completed the Academic Integrity Test before embarking on the first summative assessment in the school. If this is not possible ensure that monitoring is in place to identify those students that have not completed the Test prior to their first summative assessment.

e. Allow one Turnitin Originality Report (for a formative assessment) to be examined by students at the start of their programme.

f. In the current circumstances (COVID-19), with most if not all assessment administered digitally, special consideration is necessary to promote academic integrity; refer to the QAA Guidance on Assessing with Integrity in Digital Delivery.

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.

1. **Replicability and Rigour** (NB: The following apply mainly to assessments relying on subjective judgements against assessment criteria, rather than assessments which have 'objectively' correct answers, such as those reliant on facts, calculation or formulae, though even in the latter, schools are advised to at least consider the degree to which the following options may be applicable).

    a. Where several colleagues are involved in marking an assessment, collectively agree on the task demands, and pass standard, prior to setting the assessment.

    b. Once task demands are agreed, check that assessment criteria are fit for that task's purpose, and if not, collectively agree on adjustments to those criteria, and have them approved by STSEC (assessment criteria should be appended in CoPAs, or a link to those assessment criteria on Minerva should be provided).

    c. If using generic school criteria, agree within the module team how those criteria apply to the task set.

    d. For new tasks, use calibration exercises to try to ensure that those marking that task give similar marks (e.g. develop a short example of the completed task and have those involved with marking assess that example, followed by a collective review of their comments and marks awarded – this may then require further adjustment of the task and/or criteria).

    e. For new staff, use calibration exercises to try to ensure that their marking is calibrated well against other colleagues in the school.

    f. At school briefing days for student education, introduce a short calibration exercise each year to try to maintain marking consistency between colleagues.

    g. If you are obliged to re-use the same assessment from year to year perhaps in response to PSRB requirements for example, then you should change some aspect on an annual basis, such as the data, time-period, focus, to maintain academic integrity **(see Academic Integrity 4b).**

    h. If you change assessments from year to year, within a level, then new collective agreement within a module team should be sought on task demands, pass standard and assessment criteria as well as confirming that the amended task still tests the intended LOs.

2. **Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning**

    a. Associate module formative and summative assessments with identified LOs.

    b. With formal assessment for learning (formative assessment) exercises, zero-weight these and ensure they are identified in either the coursework or examination tables in the module specification (to do otherwise, is to underestimate the volume of assessment associated with that module).

    c. Ensure that formative exercises do realistically prepare students for the summative exercises.

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.

1. **Relevance**

   a. If your forms of assessment tend to be similar from level to level, amend assessment criteria to reflect the greater expectations from level to level.

   b. If your assessment structures change as the levels progress, check the variety of assessment types or formats used to see if at least some resemble the types of activity that might be expected of a graduate in your discipline.

   c. Check that the variety provides transferable skills that might be useful for further study, or graduate employment.

2. **Authenticity**

   a. Introduce in the final year, forms of assessment that do more realistically model the types of task that graduates might encounter particularly in graduate employment.

   b. If you do not currently have more authentic assessments in the final year, and for some reason it is not possible to introduce such forms, for example because the likely career/study pathways following graduation are too diverse, identify other means by which you can prepare students for further study/graduate employment.

   c. Remember issues associated with Inclusivity when developing more authentic forms of assessment; discussion and co-design or assessment with students is likely to be of value **(see Inclusivity 2e)**.

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 (**see Readiness**).*

1. Tasks

a. Bring all those involved in assessing a given task in a module together to agree on task demands (**see Reliability 1a**) including what is necessary from students in order to meet the passing standard.

b. Include assessment or task briefs in all module handbooks/Minerva module templates, outlining to students what is expected of them in the assessment task to be set.

c. In school student education away or briefing days, include a discussion on the nature of tasks used, particularly any new tasks, to share an understanding of task demands such that all personal tutors can credibly discuss performance on tasks with their students.

d. At STSEC, agree on the nomenclature to be used for the assessment tasks used by the school and agree on definition of such tasks.

e. Make clear to all academic members of staff that these labels and definitions are those to be used, to help students and staff understand that, for example, Task X in Module A is similar to Task Y in Module B.

f. If your school is involved in Joint Honours or Interdisciplinary provision, liaise with the Programme Leaders and Link Tutors in the partner schools to check that your nomenclature and definitions are consistent with those of the other school(s).

2. Assessment Criteria

a. Publish all your school's assessment criteria in the CoPA and on Minerva.

b. Ensure that you have separate assessment criteria for each of the tasks you are using (e.g. presentations, essays, reports etc).

c. Discuss if each assessment brief would be better served by having truly differentiated assessment criteria (**see Reliability 1b**), that is, move away from generic criteria to individual task-specific criteria.

d. Ensure that assessment criteria show development over the course of the UG programme(s) by level and into Taught PG programmes, to reflect the different expectations of the FHEQs; in so doing, what is necessary for a pass mark should also be identified (**see Reliability 1a, 1b, and 1h**).

e. Establish a process, through STSEC, for the development and approval of new criteria when new tasks are designed and involve students in this process (**see Readiness**).

f. If you haven't already done so, introduce in your marking processes a process to confirm that markers are presenting feedback and awarding marks that are aligned with published criteria (e.g. second/check markers confirm that marks/feedback are consistent with criteria as part of the second/check marking process) (**see Validity, Inclusivity and Sensitivity 3e and Informative**).

Readiness

Readiness means that those undertaking marking (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.

1. Readiness for Staff

a. Ensure that new staff and PGRs who may be involved in teaching and assessing student work undergo training in your school's specific assessment regimes before undertaking assessment in the school (OD&PL training is excellent, but generic – this needs to be supplemented with specifics of the local assessment environment). This training should cover both the types of assessment and the criteria used for judging quality/demonstration of LOs.

b. When new assessment tasks are approved at STSEC, introduce calibration exercises for all those likely to be using those tasks (**see Transparency 1a and 1c**) to prepare them for assessment of that task.

c. When new assessment criteria are developed (**see Transparency 2e**) hold a session in the school to explain how these new criteria are to be used and for which assessment tasks or include such a session in the away or briefing days.

d. In school student education or away day briefings, include calibration exercises to help with maintenance of similar standards (**see Transparency 1c**) across those undertaking assessments. These sessions should consider standard-setting (agreement on what constitutes a pass mark), and benchmarking (e.g. alignment with the FHEQ, Benchmark Statements or PSRB requirements) in addition to calibration between assessors.

e. As new assessment tools are introduced (e.g. Turnitin Feedback Studio, or other assessment tools in Minerva), provide training for those required or likely to be using such tools. Again, generic OD&PL or Digital Education Service/IT training may be available, but how these tools will be used in the school needs to supplement these generic sources of information or training.

f. When such tools are introduced, establish some process by which you can check that the use is consistent with more traditional forms of assessment (e.g. that feedback and particularly marks awarded remain consistent with feedback and marks awarded for that task when assessed using a more traditional approach). NB: It is often the case that feedback may be enhanced when using the Feedback Studio, for example, but this does not mean necessarily that marks awarded will be consistent or aligned with the LOs set. The use of the rubric field in the Feedback Studio can be helpful in ensuring alignment.

2. Readiness for Students

a. At Open Days, (pre- and post-application) include a session on the expectations and nature of the assessment regime they will encounter if they become a student in your school.

b. During induction, hold a session in which you prepare students for the style, language, and types of assessment they will encounter. This should be co-ordinated with Student Support, as the focus of the latter is likely to be on pastoral support.

c. At the start of each level, hold a similar session with students to highlight how assessment criteria expectations may have changed, and the nature of new tasks they will encounter.

d. Check students' understanding of your assessment criteria, via Student:Staff Forums (SSFs) or other mechanisms.

e. Ensure that assessment briefs are included in module handbooks/Minerva module templates (**see Transparency 1b**).

f. Check that assessment briefs are written in a student-friendly language.

g. Involve students when developing or amending assessment criteria; co-created criteria leads to better understanding of, and engagement with, assessment criteria on the part of both students and staff (**see Inclusivity 2e and Authenticity 2c**).

h. Discuss with students how formative and summative assessment are related in modules, such as to demonstrate that formative assessment is appropriately preparatory for subsequent summative assessment.

i. Introduce exercises in self- and peer-assessment early in the programme to help students understand the assessment processes and regime. Such exercises should not be used to replace formative assessment.

j. Ensure that students are provided with appropriate training for the use of the technical systems used to both provide assessment and support assessment; this may be, for example, the Turnitin Feedback Studio, or assessment functionality embedded within Minerva. Training should also extend to provision to ensure that students know where they can access resources such as the School's Code of Practice on Assessment, and other also sources of information about the School's approach to assessment and feedback.

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).

1. Informative for Students

a. Prior to marking, encourage staff to review the task demands set out in the brief provided for students.

b. If you use electronic marking (e.g. Turnitin Feedback Studio) to provide feedback, ensure that those providing feedback don't rely on standard feedback libraries (rubrics) only, but also provide constructive in-text feedback.

c. If you are still using cover or summary sheets for feedback, ensure that there is space for written comments and that this space is used, rather than relying solely on tick boxes for example.

d. If you do use cover sheets with tick boxes, align those boxes to the relevant assessment criteria for that task.

e. If using cover sheets, ensure that comments in the text are also used as these tend to be more specific, and often of a different tone, so have colleagues review in-text feedback before completing cover sheets in order to ensure consistency and alignment with the marks awarded.

f. Ensure that feedback both acknowledges what was done well, whilst also giving guidance on how to improve, and in the latter case, with enough detail to allow the student to know how to improve.

g. Encourage staff to avoid the use of symbols (i.e. ?, X, ✓) unless those staff explain to students what such symbols mean (e.g. ? = I don't know what this means; X = this is incorrect; ✓ = this is correct) and encourage all those involved in assessment to use these symbols consistently.

h. Similarly, encourage staff to avoid simple terms, such as 'good', 'needs more elaboration' etc, as such terms do not provide enough guidance to be informative.

i. When feedback is complete, encourage staff to review that feedback in order to arrive at a mark that is consistent with that feedback.

j. If some staff are using audio- or video-feedback for individual students, ensure that such feedback specifies where, perhaps by page and paragraph, in the work, improvement is needed, or there is a particular strength.

k. In your second or check marking processes, introduce some element to require the second or check marker to review and confirm that the feedback provided is informative to students (**see Transparency 2f**).

2. Informative for Staff

a. Summarise task assessment criteria on coversheets, or in the rubrics on electronic platforms such as the Feedback Studio to support staff in ensuring that their feedback and awarded mark/grade is aligned with the criteria.

b. Encourage staff to review their feedback prior to making final decisions about the mark or grade to be awarded; this will help colleagues arrive at both a more consistent mark but also support their judgement should the mark be challenged, by for example a second or check marker, and assist external examiners in approving module marks.

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.

1. Partnership for Students

a. Discuss with the school and students the value of peer and self-assessment by students.

b. Introduce opportunities for students to discuss the school's assessment regime with staff and PGRs who teach/assess.

c. Involve students, perhaps via SSFs, in the development and agreement of new tasks and assessment criteria (**see Readiness 2g**).

d. When you are reviewing comments elicited via the National Student Survey, University Programme Surveys, or module evaluations, discuss any comments about assessment and feedback with students to demonstrate to the students that you are engaging with such comments.

e. When you make changes to assessment structures, tasks or criteria, involve students to explain the nature of changes and explore their views on the changes (**see Readiness 2c, 2d and 2f**).

f. If it appears that students are not engaging with feedback (which takes valuable time to provide), explore with students why this might be the case.

2. Partnership for Staff

a. Discuss comments provided by students about assessment and feedback with staff to help school colleagues understand the concerns expressed by students about their assessment experiences.

Endorsed by Assessment Strategy Group (10 June 2020)