



CODE OF PRACTICE ON ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX S

Flexible Assessment Policy

2024-25

Applicable to all cohorts

In the Code of Practice on Assessment and all Appendices the term “student” includes apprentices on degree apprenticeship programmes.

For the purposes of this policy, references to modules shall also apply to components in non-modular programmes.

Flexible Assessment Policy

1 Overview and Definition(s)

- 1.1 'Flexible Assessment' is the act of providing students with a set of options from which to select or construct an appropriate assessment methodology that works best for their interests, abilities and their area of focus during the specific assessment activity. These might include (but are not necessarily limited to):
- 1.1.1 The option to select and complete an assessment type from a list of different available submission types;
 - 1.1.2 The option to select an approach from a number of different approaches to the same submission type (such as setting the task to be a 15-minute video submission, but with options on the content, file format, and software used);
 - 1.1.3 The option to construct the assessment entirely within a given set of parameters (such as a self-constructed essay question with pre-defined elements);
 - 1.1.4 Patchwork assessments, where students complete a set of formative tasks that they themselves identify across a period of time and then 'stitch' selected ones (or all of them) together to form a final submission.
- 1.2 In each of these cases, as well as in any other assessment strategy that falls under this policy, the tutor outlines the degree of flexibility to the assessment and the procedure through which students select their options. The student then takes an active role in selecting the desired elements of the assessment, within the tutor-defined parameters and procedure.
- 1.3 Prior Flexible assessment is an inclusive assessment strategy, as it helps academics respond to the needs of individual students, allows for equitable distinctions in how students complete their assessments, and helps to develop assessment variety across a programme. It also allows for the implementation of student-focused, authentic and scenario-based assessment strategies, helping students to more actively engage in the assessment. At the same time, however, the restriction of choice based on the parameters of the curriculum (such as the Learning Outcomes and the marking criteria) helps to ensure that the needs of the curriculum are also met. Whilst it may not be possible to provide a choice of assessment in every module or programme component due to context and learning outcomes, tutors are encouraged where possible when developing new provision or amending current modules to consider offering flexible assessment opportunities.

2 Underlying Principles

- 2.1 There are a number of key principles to which any flexible assessment option offered at the University of Liverpool should adhere. Flexible assessment strategies should always:
- 2.1.1 Provide a degree of optionality in either the format, completion or construction of the assessment;
 - 2.1.2 Be transparent, in that any assessment type or format available to the student must consist of something to which they have already been exposed to on their programme (for example, this could be through engaging with the form in a taught session, in an asynchronous task, or through specific exploration of the form in an assessment-orientation session). For modules that run across multiple programmes, you will need to

use formative assessment within the module to ensure all students are exposed to the relevant type or style of assessment;

- 2.1.3 Be valid, to ensure they align with and effectively test the module learning outcomes outlined in the module specification, regardless of the optionality within the assessment itself;
 - 2.1.4 Be student-led as much as possible, with students provided with enough information to be able to effectively select the most appropriate or relevant assessment option or approach in their own context;
 - 2.1.5 Be authentic, in that they encourage reflection on/engagement with skills/knowledge that is relevant to students' future goals and/or is connected to potential employment or discipline-specific situations;
 - 2.1.6 Be efficient, in that each of the assessment options can be marked using the established marking criteria and the agreed rubric in place for that assessment;
 - 2.1.7 Be reliable and manageable, in that each of the alternative assessment type(s) should be comparable to each other in terms of student workload and appropriate for the assessment weighting, and should all produce comparable outputs regardless of submission type;
 - 2.1.8 Ensure that feedback provided to students is comparable in terms of quality and the extent to which students can take action based on the feedback they receive to improve their work in future assignments.
- 2.2 At the same time, there are also some restrictions to which academics planning on using flexible assessments must adhere:
- 2.2.1 This policy does not permit the use of flexible assessments where an assessment on a given module is identified as an examination;
 - 2.2.2 Each assessment option must be marked using the same marking criteria and rubric to ensure equity for all students in the marking and feedback process;
 - 2.2.3 Each assessment option must assess the same identified learning outcomes on the module specification;
 - 2.2.4 If a student fails a flexible assessment and is permitted a re-assessment opportunity, where possible the choice of assessment types, approaches and construction should still be open to the student. However, the use of a different method of assessment is allowed, provided that the re-assessment tests the same learning outcomes as the original as detailed under paragraph 10.3 of the COPA.

3 Approval Process

- 3.1 As with any assessment design, the use of a flexible assessment will be identified by the module lead and identified as such in the module specification and aligned to the standard quality assurance processes.
- 3.2 Flexible assessment approval will be subject to existing quality assurance and approval processes for new modules or module modifications, with details of the flexible assessment clearly identified in the module specification. This should include details of what is negotiable, for example, the range of potential forms of assessment, the elements that can be student-constructed, or the approach to the assessment's completion.

3.3 Details of the flexible assessment, as set out in the module specification will also be included in the module handbook or equivalent.

3.4 As with all assessments, the module handbook and VLE should set out a clear timeline and deadlines by which the assessment process should be completed.

4 Further Information

4.1 Accompanying guidance, to be used in conjunction with this Policy, can be found on the Centre for Innovation in Education webpages:

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/centre-for-innovation-in-education/policies/flexible-assessment-guidance.pdf>