Assessment Strategy

2017-2021
Assessment Strategy 2017 – 2021

Who we are and will be...

Our assessments will be fair, of high quality and enjoyably challenging; they will prepare students with the skills and attributes required within their discipline and by employers.

Transformative teaching and learning

*Our curricula, teaching and assessment will be enjoyably challenging: the best education is demanding, transforming and enlivening, and it will focus on future employability and professional success.*

*Our programmes and modules will provide a variety of high-quality learning, assessment and self-evaluation opportunities; by focusing on feed-forward as well as feedback, we will better prepare our students for the opportunities, behaviours and demands of the professional workplace.*

*University of Leicester Discovery-led and Discovery-enabling Learning Strategy 2016 – 2020*

Assessment of student learning and competence is at the heart of higher education. The academic standards of our University and students are evidenced and verified by assessment.

League tables, so important to the institution’s reputation, rest on a foundation of students’ satisfaction with our assessment and employers of our students recruit their staff based on competency measured by our assessments. In addition to impact on the institution, students and employers, assessment has an influence on staff, from life-work balance to leaving sufficient time for research.

This Assessment Strategy aims to describe the University’s underlying principles of assessment, encourage the development of shared language around assessment, clarify roles and responsibilities of all University of Leicester staff involved in assessment and facilitate the enhancement of assessment and feedback.
Our commitments, 2017-2021

Our assessments will be for and of learning.

- Our assessments will encourage students to build on and integrate earlier learning and knowledge.
- Assessment will be key to the wider student experience and not just the means to obtain marks and meet learning objectives.
- Our assessment will enable students to evaluate their learning.

Our assessments will be coherent at programme level.

- Our assessments will be structured to allow students opportunities to improve performance progressively over the programme.
- For each programme, our assessments will address the Transferable Skills Framework and Accessible Assessment Guidelines.
- Our Programme Specifications will map assessments against programme learning outcomes.

Our staff and students will be assessment literate. Implicit and explicit elements of assessments will be included in programme design and be used to deliver agreements in the Feedback Charter.

- Our staff and students will recognise the purpose of assessment and the explicit and implicit elements of the assessment and feedback process and share responsibility for it.
- Assessment literacy, the understanding of the language and process of assessment, feedback and academic integrity and ethics (including plagiarism) will be a feature of all programmes.
- Our staff and students will develop a shared understandings of the expectations of assessment, assessment criteria, and what good academic practice ‘looks like’.
- Our students will be provided with opportunities to self and peer-assess/reflect on their work, and compare standards with those set by staff.
- Our staff will reflect on how students are engaging with and interpreting feedback throughout their programme.

We will harmonise assessment and re-assessment workload to ensure loads are appropriate and reasonable.

- Our assessment loading and challenge per module will be consistent and progressive according to the benchmarked norms.
- Our assessment design will consider the workloads of students and staff, staff and student numbers and the size and volume of assessments.
- Our students will be given sufficient time to reflect and act upon feedback between assignments where this is practical.

Our assessments of learning will aim to be authentic, show achievement of threshold standards and stratify student achievement.

- Our assessment of learning will distinguish where students have or have not met threshold standards (i.e. pass/fail).
- We will use alternative reassessments where appropriate and ensure that they test the same
learning outcomes as the original assessment.

- Our assessment of learning will allow students to be stratified based on standards of achievement according to shared and peer-reviewed marking rubrics.
- Our students will benefit from intrinsically worthwhile, authentic assessments that wherever possible are aligned with the expectations of academic disciplines, professional bodies and employers.
- Our authentic assessments will support the professional development and graduate attributes our students need to pursue successful careers.

**Our assessments will align with the UoL Digital by Default strategy.**

- Our assessments will, wherever practical, be completed, submitted, marked, fed back and archived in digital format.
- We will make creative use of digital platforms to contribute to the diversity, authenticity and efficiency of assessments.
Our priorities, 2017-2021

Our Assessment Strategy will be delivered by:

- The introduction of Assessment Strategy Design Principles that outline our expectations for assessment design across the University.

- Deployment of self-assessment tools to guide programme teams through the Assessment Strategy Design Principles, assessment variety, transferable skills and workload management.

- Ensuring assessment is at the heart of the programme development process with explicit sections addressing the Assessment Strategy Design Principles (Appendix I) included in the programme approval and design documentation.

- Working with students to create an Assessment Literacy Guide to complement the Feedback Charter; this will inform the curriculum enhancement process and support students and staff in their assessment literacy.

- Regular auditing of assessment at programme level for alignment to the Assessment Strategy as part of Developmental Review and Curriculum Planning processes.

- Integrating educational designers and quality advisers into the planning of assessments during the Programme Approval, Developmental Review and Curriculum Planning processes.

- Bringing together, in a single, cross-referenced, web-based resource, all guidance and documentation associated with assessment design, evaluation and literacy.
Our Culture

The culture of assessment contributes to development of graduates’ attributes and prepares students for their life after university.

Our staff are supported and encouraged to be innovative and creative in their assessment design. This will be fostered by review and active collaborations within and between academic departments and divisions.

We will recognise, applaud, reward and share excellence in the support of student learning in the area of assessment.

Our Measures of Success

Our success will be measurable through a range of qualitative and quantitative metrics. Progress against these will be reviewed annually, but over the first three years of the Strategy (2017-19) critical indicators will include:

- **Measures**
  - Improvement in the national rankings based on the student experience to re-establish Leicester as a Top 20 University; *monitored by ULT.*

- **Project Outcomes:**
  - Successful use by project teams of self-assessment tools to audit assessment design, variety and timing across each programme.
  - Consideration of assessment at the programme level as part of the Developmental Review process.
  - Greater consistency in module assessment loading across the University.
  - Use of alternative re-assessment wherever appropriate.
  - A reduction in overall assessment to the sector average for the discipline of study wherever possible.
  - A reduction in the overall January examination load by around 50%.

- **Targets:**
  - Improvement in the rankings for the DLHE survey (Target upper quartile of HEIs and exceeding benchmark, currently on benchmark, ranked 56th)*; monitored by Career Development Service and Careers Development Advisory Board.
  - Improvement in the National Student Survey and Post-Graduate Taught Experience Survey scores; *monitored by CACs and APC.*

Linkage to Other Strategies

The Assessment Strategy is closely dependent on a number of strategies aside from the University’s overarching Strategic Plan, these include:

- Learning Strategy
- Physical Environment Strategy
- Digital Strategy
- College Learning Strategies
• Personal Tutoring Strategy
• Student and Academic Services Strategy
• International Strategy