

# 8

# Principles of Assessment of/for/as Learning

1

## Self-regulated learners.

Our approaches to assessment can support students to critically evaluate their own work and to be able to monitor their learning. Where students make changes and consider actions to their work, based on this activity, they are 'self-regulating' their work. These self-monitoring and self-regulating activities can be termed Assessment AS Learning.

2

## Assessment and feedback should be clear and understandable by staff and students.

Staff and students should understand the language around the purpose of assessment, for instance, formative or summative. Both groups should understand the expectations associated with any assessment task. In turn, the feedback and feedback processes should be meaningful and interpretable.

3

## Decisions on assessment and feedback should be guided by a programme-level approach.

Assessment and feedback are central to the question of how we can enhance and transform teaching and learning in higher education. Underpinning this is a recognition of the benefits of adopting a programme-level approach to assessment and feedback. This approach is important because:

- it can allow for a more effective and efficient use of time and resources
- it allows staff to plan for a diversity of assessments across the programme, both familiar and unfamiliar
- it can support students to develop complex understanding and challenge their learning by building on learning in previous and parallel modules
- the design and positioning of assessment and feedback within a programme is key to the integration of learning from different modules in ways that prepare students to apply their learning successfully within their lives and work.

4

## Assessment and feedback approaches should foster partnership between staff and students.

Students have an important role to play in becoming more empowered in their own assessment and feedback processes. Fostering this partnership, and supporting student engagement more broadly, is essential to helping student to optimise the sort of learning opportunities offered by, for instance, dialogic approaches to feedback, and to encouraging them to take ownership of their learning and their higher education experience.

5

## Students should experience a diverse range of assessment methods, including, where relevant, authentic and work-based assessments.

Supporting the development of more diversity of assessment and feedback approaches is important for the enhancement of teaching and learning. Both the 'Assess for Success' [Approaches to Assessment](#) and [Designing Authentic Assessment](#) guides provide ideas and advice for staff interested in expanding their assessment repertoire towards student success.





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### Assessment and feedback should be manageable for staff and students.

Both students and staff can feel overwhelmed when there is over-assessment or assessment 'bunching'. Staff wishing to ensure that assessment and feedback is manageable might consider taking a programme approach to assessment, reducing the assessment workload where appropriate, and reviewing their feedback strategies (see the Maynooth University 'Assess for Success' [Feedback and feedback literacy guide](#)).

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### Assessment and feedback should be enhanced through staff engaging in related professional development, including engagement in the scholarship in this area.

The [Maynooth University Assess for Success hub](#) has been developed by the University's CTL under the guidance of a University community [Advisory Group](#). The hub provides a host of local and international resources, and a range of suggestions, around how to enhance your approaches to assessment and feedback. The hub is research-informed and has drawn from national and international models of good practice and scholarship.

8

### Assessment and feedback should be supported by enabling policies.

Enabling policies should support the enhancement of assessment practices and should include the wider understanding of assessment of, for and as learning. As our assessment and feedback practices evolve, and as the learning and assessment environment changes including becoming more flexible, we need to work as a university community to articulate policies that can reliably underpin and guide our practice.



## About this resource

As noted on its website, the 2016-18 Enhancement Theme of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education 'focused on **Assessment OF/FOR/AS Learning**, .... A national understanding of Assessment OF/FOR/AS Learning was developed, along with a set of principles to underpin assessment in Irish higher education and supporting resources' (National Forum).

This short guide draws directly from the [Principles of Assessment OF/FOR/AS Learning](#) which is available on the National Forum website and is shared under a [Creative Commons CC-BY licence](#).

The National Forum notes that the following principles 'give some focused guidance for assessment and feedback in Irish higher education'. While the principles included in this document are quoted directly from the National Forum publication, the notes on each principle in some instances have been edited for the purposes of producing this short guide.

## References and related reading



Brown, S. and Sambell, K. (2022) *Approaches to Assessment. A Maynooth University 'Assess for Success' Guide*. Maynooth: Maynooth University.

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