



Workshop 2 notes:

Co-creation of assessment methods

Introductory guidance

This is part of a series of six workshop templates introduced in a separate guide: [Exploring student engagement with academic staff: user guidance](#). Please refer to that document for general introductory guidance on organising these discussion workshops, including steps to take before and after the event.

About this workshop

The purpose of this workshop is to present the learning objectives for a course and to involve students in devising ways that the objectives can be assessed in an online (or not in-person) environment. It is a chance for staff to reflect on assessment, learn from students, and develop approaches to co-creation.

Each section is outlined in the paragraphs that follow, and can be adapted according to context and requirements.

Preparation in advance

This workshop involves devising methods of assessment corresponding to the learning objectives for a course. To facilitate discussion, you should prepare in advance some materials (for example slides) to communicate the following:

- a) The learning objectives that should be assessed.
- b) The usual assessment method (i.e. pre-COVID restrictions) for assessing each of these.

Further reading to aid your preparation

- Fuller, R., Joynes, V., Cooper, J., Boursicot, K. and Roberts, T. 2020. Could COVID-19 be our 'There is no alternative' (TINA) opportunity to enhance assessment?, *Medical Teacher*, 42, (7), 781-786. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2020.1779206>
- Jisc. 2020. How COVID-19 has changed student assessment for good. <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/how-covid-19-has-changed-student-assessment-for-good-15-jun-2020>
- Sambell, K. and Brown, S. Covid-19 Assessment Collection. <https://sally-brown.net/kay-sambell-and-sally-brown-covid-19-assessment-collection/>
- sparqs. 2021. COVID-19 course rep briefing on assessment. <https://www.sparqs.ac.uk/upfiles/COVID%20Briefing%20note%20for%20reps%20on%20assessment.pdf>

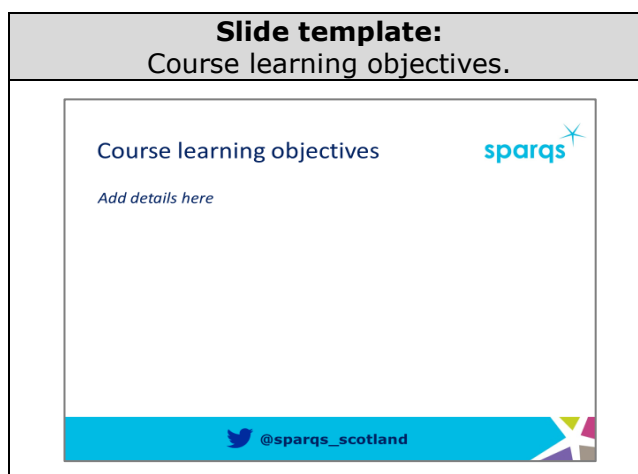


Presentation - Outline of usual assessment methods

This section involves presenting an outline of the usual assessment methods (i.e. those that existed previously in a non-COVID environment) along with an explanation of how these were mapped to the learning objectives for the course.

The purpose of this is to provide a context for the discussions that follow below. It is helpful for participants to have a reasonable grasp of the learning objectives before attempting to devise any new methods of assessment.

It is recommended that the key information for this section be summarised on some slides and/or a handout. The slides provided can be customised.



Activity A - Discussion of proposed alternative assessment methods

Where alternative methods of assessment have been devised (suitable for a context impacted by COVID-19, or for a period of transition or change, or proposals intended as a permanent new model) these can be described at this point. Again, make clear how they relate to the learning objectives. A handout or presentation slides may be helpful.

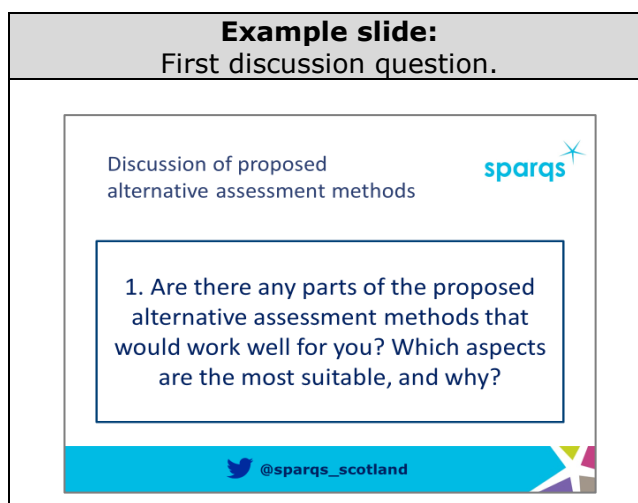
Once the proposed assessment methods have been outlined, the main part of this activity is designed to generate feedback from students on the suitability of these methods. This activity can take place as a whole group, or in breakout groups, depending on numbers attending.

One way to generate discussion is to provide a small number of prompt questions, such as these:

1. Are there any parts of the proposed alternative assessment methods that would work well for you? Which aspects are the most suitable, and why?
2. Are there any parts of the proposed alternative assessment methods that would not work well for you? Which aspects are the least suitable, and why?
3. What are the constraints in your context that might impede your strong achievement? Which factors are you facing that might prevent you performing well?

Slides are provided for these three questions. The questions (and slides) can be customised to suit your needs.

The idea of the activity is to generate discussion and feedback from students. So, introduce each question in turn, and give adequate time to generate feedback and discussion on each question. In most cases, questions should be taken in turn, not all together.





Activity B - Co-creation of new alternative assessment methods

In this activity, participants are invited to suggest new proposals for assessment methods for the course.

Where numbers allow, it can be powerful to arrange this discussion in breakout groups involving one or two staff and a small number of students, in order to work in partnership on the co-creation of alternative assessment methods. Students know first-hand their study context and learning environment, including the constraints that have come about as a result of COVID-19, and they are well placed to make suggestions that suit that context. Staff members have good knowledge of the learning objectives of the course and may be able to guide and shape student suggestions to ensure they meet the assessment aims and the needs of the department team.

One way to organise this discussion is to present a reminder the learning objectives of the course (one by one or all together) and invite suggestions for how students would like to be assessed on those points.

The following questions may help generate discussion:

- a) Which of the learning objectives could be assessed through:
 - i. A traditional timed written exam?
 - ii. An open-book timed written exam?
 - iii. A non-timed assignment written exam?
- b) Other than exams and assignments, in which other ways could students demonstrate their knowledge and skills? Can this help us design any alternative assessment methods for the course?
- c) Is it necessary for all students to be assessed in the same way? Could different members of the class choose between different assessment methods depending on how best they feel able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills? Can this be designed in a way that is fair for the whole class?
- d) Which of the learning objectives would usually require practical skills to be assessed in a lab or workshop? If this is currently not possible, is there an alternative way of achieving this at home or in another COVID-safe setting, using video or audio recordings or photographs, and/or involving submitting practical work in some way?
- e) Where external validators have a role in deciding assessment methods (for some HEIs this will be another university, and for colleges the SQA will be important), how can conversations be facilitated at this level to build a partnership approach to decisions?

Slides are provided for these five questions. The questions (and slides) can be customised to suit your needs.

Activity C - Feedback and discussion of co-created alternative assessment methods

If participants have been working in breakout groups, give a short time for each group to present a summary of their discussions. Depending on the context you might ask them to emphasise:

- Either one or more learning objectives, with the proposed assessment method(s).
- Or one or more constraints of good performance, and the proposed way to overcome this constraint.

Following the feedback from each group, give time for feedback from other participants. One structure for this is to repeat the discussion questions from Activity A, above. These are:

1. Are there any parts of the proposed alternative assessment methods that would work well for you? Which aspects are the most suitable, and why?
2. Are there any parts of the proposed alternative assessment methods that would not work well for you? Which aspects are the least suitable, and why?
3. What are the constraints in your context that might impede your successes? Which factors are you facing that might prevent you performing well?

Slides are provided for these three questions. The questions (and slides) can be customised to suit your needs.

