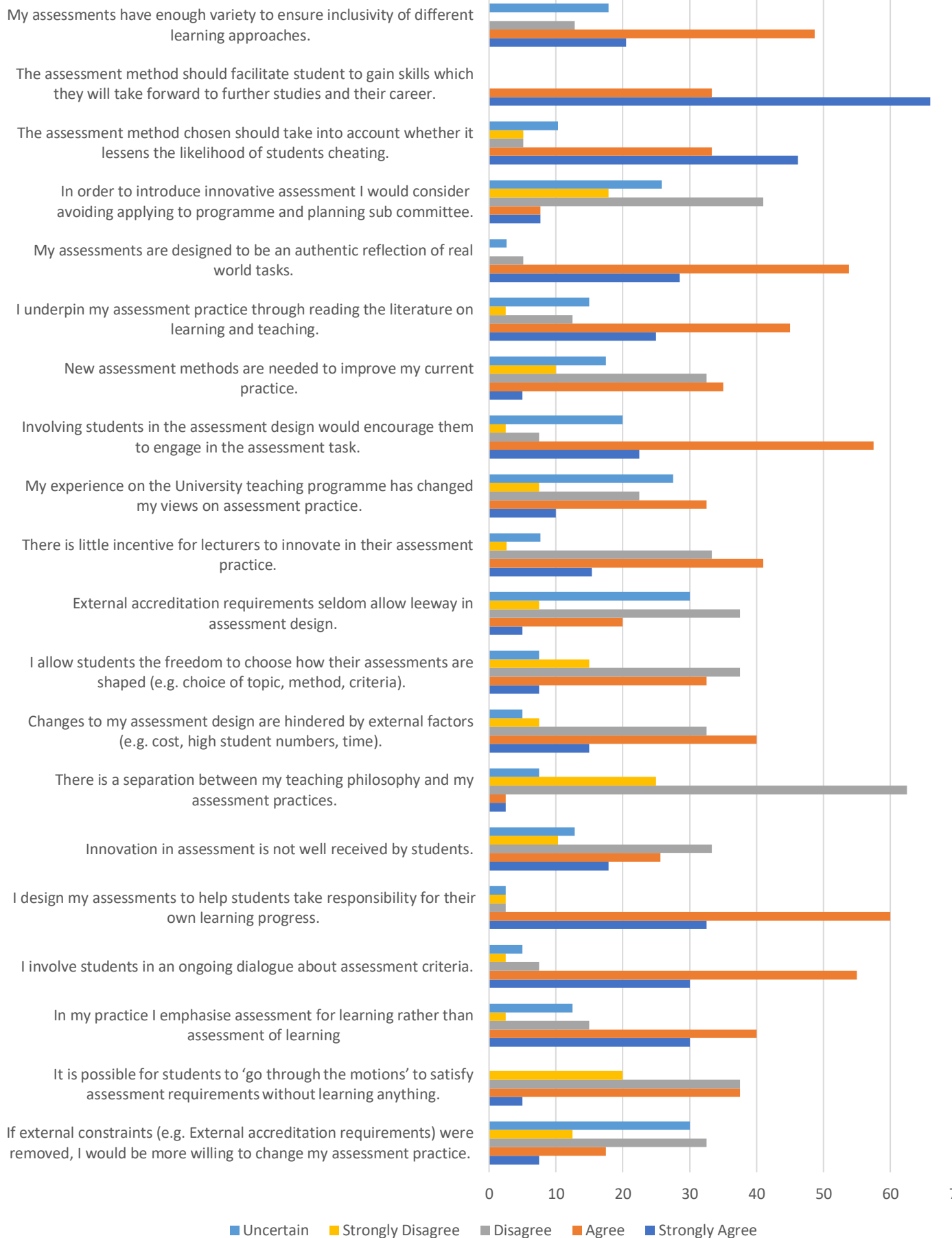# Staff Perspectives Survey Findings October 2021

Survey

40/112 academic staff from School of Health and Social Sciences and Department of Computing completed the survey between the 19th of October 2021 and the 29th of October 2021. They took an average 30.25 minutes to complete the survey.

1. **Staff views on Assessments**

Academic staff Views on Assessment

Chart showing academic staff responses to statements about assessment, measured on a scale of Uncertain, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

Statements listed (top to bottom):
- My assessments have enough variety to ensure inclusivity of different learning approaches.
- The assessment method should facilitate student to gain skills which they will take forward to further studies and their career.
- The assessment method chosen should take into account whether it lessens the likelihood of students cheating.
- In order to introduce innovative assessment I would consider avoiding applying to programme and planning sub committee.
- My assessments are designed to be an authentic reflection of real world tasks.
- I underpin my assessment practice through reading the literature on learning and teaching.
- New assessment methods are needed to improve my current practice.
- Involving students in the assessment design would encourage them to engage in the assessment task.
- My experience on the University teaching programme has changed my views on assessment practice.
- There is little incentive for lecturers to innovate in their assessment practice.
- External accreditation requirements seldom allow leeway in assessment design.
- I allow students the freedom to choose how their assessments are shaped (e.g. choice of topic, method, criteria).
- Changes to my assessment design are hindered by external factors (e.g. cost, high student numbers, time).
- There is a separation between my teaching philosophy and my assessment practices.
- Innovation in assessment is not well received by students.
- I design my assessments to help students take responsibility for their own learning progress.
- I involve students in an ongoing dialogue about assessment criteria.
- In my practice I emphasise assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning
- It is possible for students to 'go through the motions' to satisfy assessment requirements without learning anything.
- If external constraints (e.g. External accreditation requirements) were removed, I would be more willing to change my assessment practice.

Legend: Uncertain, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

2. Challenges when designing Assessments

The four themes that emerged are represented in Tables below;

Table 1. Student Engagement and Knowledge Development Changes

- Identifying suitable methods of assessment and rubrics to suit every learner in the group
- Designing for a diverse student population.
- The language used so that it is universally clear, concise and understandable for all.
- The variability in classroom numbers and diversity across learners
- Lighting the fire of the students, making the assessment something they will get stuck into, enjoy, and see the relevance from the exercise to their own development and their future career.
- Making sure that the students actually learn a useful skill/knowledge
- Making it applicable to real life while at the same time covering LO.
- Time, group size and matching the assessment to best capture module content. Teaching (student introduction to the content and its assimilation) and module assessment are too close. Where do students get time to understand and assimilate the new information? The challenge is choosing a strategy that assesses the learning outcomes and is fair to the student. Reducing assessments into a series of smaller assessments can be overwhelming for the student and cause anxiety. I think it is important to have assessments that give students equal opportunity, fairness, have clear directions, transparency in marking criteria and reflective of the learning that students have engaged with in the module.
- To enhance the learning progression
- Making it applicable to allow them apply learning in the assignment
- Ensuring that they reflect real world situations.
- No student input Non-Presenting students
- Authenticity
- Ensuring it is fair and balanced and that students will have sufficient time to complete it

Table 2. Allocation of Time and Resources

- Time and supervision. Also repeat strategies.
- Time and anticipation of student reluctance to change from Essay format
- Resource implications
- The scheduling of assessments is a challenge in terms of allowing time for individualised feedback.
- Time to give actionable feedback
- Time & resources
- Having the time to do it
- Time to organise and time to correct - eg a 6 week facilitation programme with 5 community groups involving 53 studetns. Or a 6 week personal training programme with 50 students and staff members.

- Wanting it to be formative but not having the time to 'feed forward' ie. discuss with student, give constructive, ongoing commentary during the essay writing process. Post-submission, due to time constraints, students rarely get enough individual essay feedback to improve their approach next time round.
- Cost as I would like to do more simulation/OSCE based assessment.

Table 3. Policy and infrastructure Challenges

- Matching the assessment to the learning outcomes
- Whether to include multiple components
- Sometimes the MTU criteria can hinder students ie the assessment for 5 credit modules word count could be expanded for some
- Having the time to truly engage with the literature, or the idea, to flesh it out fully. 16 hours does not sound like a lot, but it is massive in terms of the global higher ed sector. Also teaching across any number of modules and all levels does not help. I tend to steer away from policies in place and do my own thing - easier to justify it after the fact with extern support if someone does question.

- Mapping the assessment experiences to the competencies being nurtured across the programme i.e. blending competencies across contexts.
- Management interference
- The biggest challenge is that the assessment process should also guide learning
- Compliace with ACS,Timeframe for assessment, Numbers of stds per module, Robust University assessment grid, inexperience of peer assessors requiring mentoring support
- A twelve week semester is quite short so it is often difficult to design an assessment that gives enough variety given the limited amount of material covered.
- Poor IT skills
- In recent times, ensuring that assessments are 'cheat-proof e.g. 'subtle' plagiarism or essay mills.
- Ensuring academic integrity
- The university assessment structure of interim and final assessment within a semester which creates extreme assessment overload and militates against anything beyond surface learning
- A lack of support from an IT perspective can be a challenge particularly in the move to ERT.

3. Academic Staff Most Proud of in Assessments

Simulation assessments

Trying to get the best out of the student

My willingness to change/adapt while maintaining challenge for students and opportunities for achievement linked to

Weekly blogs

Developing briefs and matching rubrics in partnership with students and collaboration with other lecturers

Fairness, and consistency and covering important relevant real life knowledge that is required

Assessment is a FACT of my job, my pride doesn't play ANY part

Supporting students in preparation of assessments, and also having an open and continuous dialogue with students up until the submission date.

My authentic use of "applied learning" through assessment.

Groupwork

Being happy to change an assessment if it is not working, though this can take time so not always a timely reaction.

Reflecting industry

Students learning opportunities

Creativity

The variety of assessments used especially involvement in rolling out the ePortfolio which prepares nurses for maintaining a professional ePortfolio as registered nurses.

Clarity of the brief

Designing assignments that allow students a choice of topics that achieve the learning outcomes,

Student achievement and learning shown

The assessing of learning outcomes in shorter discrete assessments rather than assessing all in one assessment

My belief that my assessments reflect real world situations.

Having a brief, assessment rubric and everything in place

My experience and fairness

Are the instructions clear, can questions be asked and everybody see the responses for transparency, Does the assessment method capture the content of the module? Does the student have time to prepare for the assessment? can learning from this assessment inform the students engagement with further assessments?

Giving detailed feedback, identifying areas which could be improved through detail rather than broad assessment feedback.

Thorough preparation of the assessment design, with lots of support for students (even if the assessment is challenging).

Real world assessment types

Innovation and creativity that is learner centered and prepares students for life long learning

he positive feedback most students have given on the assessment approach taken

Ensuring development of student learning and development

Giving students the opportunity of showing what they know rather than what they do not know.

Assessments that incorporate a variety of skills and that are a valid assessment of the learning outcomes

Applying alternative methods such as narrated power point presentations

An assessment process whereby students use the arts to explore nursing concepts.

Thorough preparation of the assessment design, with lots of support for students (even if the assessment is challenging).

Keeping them a live work in progress, as student cohorts evolve and their interpretations evolve also, I try to keep step with my assessments to ensure they are relevant.

Linking it to practice and innovation of discussion boards as it aids learning

My continuous reflection-on-learning model of formative student self-assessment assessment

4. Academic Staff Views in Terms of marking and Feedback

Table 4 Marking and Feedback

	Agree	Disagree
Professional training should play an important part in lecturers' marking practice.	80%	17.5%
There is a common understanding between lecturers of their subject specific marking criteria.	47.5%	40%
Initial formal training in feedback skills should be mandatory.	77.5%	12.5%
There is often a lack of agreement on how marking schemes are applied.	62.5%	32.5%
Students generally understand marking criteria.	50%	37.5%
The fact that students tend not to carry forward what they have learnt from feedback into their next assignments is indicative of a failure in the assessment and feedback processes.	45%	37.5%
The fact students often do not collect written feedback/ attend oral feedback is indicative of a failure in the assessment and feedback processes.	32.5%	47.5%
Feedback comments are often written to satisfy external requirements	15%	70%
Formal training in marking skills should be part of continuing professional development.	80%	12.5%
Marking criteria are too prescriptive.	20%	55%
Using marking criteria can never be objective because they are weighted differently by individual lecturers	40%	40%
The fact that increasingly students are only interested in a grade is indicative of a failure in the learning process.	55%	30%
There is too much bureaucracy associated with the whole marking/feedback system.	40%	40%
Formal training in feedback skills should be part of continuing professional development.	82.5%	15%
It is often necessary to look beyond the marking criteria when awarding a grade.	57.5%	32.5%
Concentrating exclusively on marking criteria limits the effectiveness of feedback.	32.5%	40%
Initial formal training in marking should be mandatory.	77.5%	17.5%
All assessments can be graded fairly within the short timescales available to me.	32.5%	45%
My Feedback process gives opportunity for the student to "feed-forward" and take action on what they have learnt in one assignment to improve their future work	85%	2.5%

5. Feedback Challenges

Present challenges under Covid was stated, Two respondents stated they experienced no particular challenges in terms of feedback with one further clarifying " I provide very detailed written feedback and provide the opportunity for a one-to-one meeting to discuss feedback".

Outside of latter comments two Core themes emerged: Time and Student Engagement.

Resource Challenge

- Turn around time very tight and also trying to make time for student meetings is hard as I think face-to-face feedback works better.
- Time x 9
- Student Numbers x 3
- Need to create a space for feedback sessions within an already tight teaching schedule
- Lack of practice using software
- Time and planning to factor it in to ensure it always happens and it is impossible for students to forget!
- Large student numbers
- Time - time to engage with the student one to one
- Having limited one-to-one time.
- I used turnitin to provide feedback, a challenge I foresee is that Ouriginal is not going to work as well in provision of feedback or perhaps my unfamiliarity with it.
- Banner does not allow feedback comments on assessments
- Tight timescales between correcting assessments, providing grades while already consumed by preparing for next assessment; the students' tendency to fright the grade rather than ask why they received it and what they need to do to change.
- Time pressure on students which reduces the likelihood of them taking feedback into account
- The short turn around time of our assessment/examination process. Another challenge I anticipate is the new 'Ouriginal' interface - even in training its limitations for feedback are raised in comparison to Turnitin.
- Getting work completed earlier in the term, corrected so they are in a position to get the feedback before producing their next piece of work, which should demonstrate improvement based on the feedback given

Student Engagement

- Incentivizing engagement in the process by students. Their second-level experiences often damage their scope for developing a growth mindset, thus they see feedback as a setback rather than as a gift. They are encultured to only focus on the final number, not the constituent numbers or the written/verbal feedback The time required to prepare a short but individualised report for each student that is mapped to the criteria in the rubric
- Integrating formative assessment in the short semester. Students are increasingly only interested in the grade mark and not learning.

- To get them to engage with it
- Time. By the time summative assessments are complete students are looking at the content / assessment of a new semesters modules / assessments. Students see modules as stand alone and do not see how the modules link to each other. Feedback meetings are seen by students in MTU for those who have failed and not for all. How feedback is given is not helpful i.e. going to a room and students (who do attend) have to move between 4 - 8 lecturers within a 2 hour period.
- To get the students to engage with the process. Once an assessment is done, there is little interest from students in focusing on it as a learning process.
- It is not mandatory, and not all students come for feedback. There are some students that I would have liked to meet to share my feedback with them as I believed that I had very important information to share with the student before they progress to the next stage.
- Getting them, in most programmes, to engage. X 2
- The majority of students requesting feedback are non-attenders or non-presenting students
- Students fail to see the value of general feedback provided to the class. It is hard to know whether they understand and apply this or individual feedback going forward. Unless you have a student for a consecutive assessment component, module or semester it is hard to know if their ability to interpret the brief, create structure and flow within a written piece etc has actually improved based on feedback given.
- Feedback when groups of lecturers are involved can lead to providing a feedback strategy that may not provide students with the most effective feedback for them to learn from the process
- Challenging students who have the potential to be unaware of how to receive feedback
- Lack of student interaction on process.

6. What Academic Staff Proud of in terms of the Feedback Processes the use.

Table. 5 Thematic presentation of Academic Staff Comments

Theme	Comments
Level of Staff Engagement	I engage with the process
	Taking the time to provide individual feedback to students
	The effort that I put in, despite only a minority acknowledging that they received FB or that it has potential to improve their subsequent performance. Every student gets equitable effort on my behalf.
	Being available to the students, giving tailored feedback rather than "one size fits all approach"
	Weekly comments on weekly blogs
	I give them a lot of time, this can be problematic however I think it is essential as they need this feedback in order to progress and improve their assessments. Not all students come for feedback so I give them as long as it takes to give them a complete review of their work, then I am satisfied that I have fulfilled my role in supporting the student improve and to avoid repeating any issues again in a potentially more advanced stage of their curriculum.
	Getting it done and maintaining the detail of feedback, though it looks like Ouriginal might make this harder.
	Immediacy
	The detailed individual feedback I give to each student.
	Spending the time to understand students' perspectives
	I always give the students the opportunity to see their script and query their mark and, on the odd occasion, this has resulted in an increase in their mark
	Being realistic
	The detail and clarity I provide
	Individual attention
	That I try to be fair and equitable. If the student achieved the grade then that is what they should achieve. There are other systems if there are special circumstances but there is a need to promote the integrity of the course and the University system.
	My compassion and integrity around marking
	Being honest in providing feedback especially to those who require it and want it.
	Clear written individual feedback especially before COVID
	My very detailed and thorough written feedback and provision of optional one-to-one feedback meetings.
	My adaptation and skill set in using the extensive text and recorded feedback settings on turn-it-in. Now, redundant.

	Providing individualised feedback on assessment performance
	Using Turnitin effectively for focused, student friendly and timely feedback.
	Always available if the students have queries
Innovation and Creativity	Use of innovative feedback methods
	Created a CA with colleagues where the first part is submitted for feedback only, no grades are associated with this CA. The students complete their own marking rubric for comparison with the grade range that the assessor will select for them.
	Providing presentation feedback sheets to all students during a couple of mock presentations, after which these presentations were peer-reviewed and discussed in class in advance of 'real' presentations.
	My use of peer presentations when feedback can be given at the point of Learning presentation.
	Using video feedback with the students on their presentations, sitting down with them and asking them to give themselves a mark based on the assessment sheet. Video feedback is an incredible feedback tool, however it is timely and not possible to do with large numbers of students.
Evidence of Impact	Seeing evidence of action on previous feedback
	Their engagement
	The feedback is constructive
	Being able to enable student improvement and development
	When a student incorporates feedback into an assessment.
	Students performing better next time
	How it improves the quality of the learning process and develops the students' confidence
	The advice Ive given to students to seek further help which has been taken up on and students have made significant improvements.
	Students following feedback having clearer directions for future assessments
	Giving detailed solutions for students to learn from
Other	My pride isnt a consideration
	Being able to justify grades awarded when questioned by students

Questions 7, 8,9, 10, 11 provide staff views on definitions and I do not see as necessary or beneficial to share at this point. They are about informing potential CPD and policy in T&L areas at end of initiative.