

# Assessment for learning: a tool for benchmarking your practice in FE and skills

See our **guidance notes** (<http://ji.sc/benchmark-guidance>) for further context and guidance on using this too. For more examples of the practices discussed in the tool see our recent **assessment** (<http://ji.sc/assessment-guide-feandskills>) and **employability** (<http://ji.sc/employability-feandskills>) case studies.

Teaching practice and learner support				
Provider focused		Learner focused		
Good practice principle	First steps	Emerging	Established	Enhanced
<b>Help all learners understand the requirements and standards for each set task</b>	Information about requirements and standards is provided in a way that is accessible to all learners	Learners are involved in activities to establish their understanding of learning outcomes and grading criteria or performance standards	Learners understand how well they meet criteria and what they need to do to improve	Learners are able to make appropriate judgements (whether professional or academic) based on criteria
<b>Examples</b>	<p>Clear, jargon-free, information is provided about the assessed task covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Format and length</li> <li>» Deadline</li> <li>» Date for feedback return</li> <li>» What constitutes good and poor performance</li> </ul>	<p>Check learners' understanding by asking them to express the criteria in their own words</p> <p>Mock tests so learners experience what is required for summative assessment in a low risk environment</p>	<p>Multiple choice tests taken before class so that class teaching can focus on areas of identified weakness</p> <p>Learners are involved in judging and comparing 'model answers' ie examples appropriate to their level and context</p>	<p>Learners have opportunities to design example assignment briefs and performance criteria</p> <p>Learners review the work of their peers in order to help their understanding of the assessment criteria</p>
<b>Support the personalised needs and preferences of learners</b>	All assessment is designed with accessibility and inclusivity in mind but we often have to make adjustments	Flexibility in providing evidence of achievement and receiving feedback in a variety of formats is available to all learners	Learners have considerable flexibility in selecting topics for assessment as well as the tools used to provide evidence	Where possible learners are offered the opportunity to negotiate aspects of the timing, topic and format of assessed work
<b>Examples</b>	Learners with special needs can submit work and receive feedback in formats adapted to their needs	Learners provide evidence and receive feedback in a variety of formats including audio, video and text	<p>Learners are offered the opportunity to select a topic for assessed work that meets a particular learning outcome</p> <p>Learners are supported and encouraged to use their own technologies, such as smart phones, to enhance their learning</p>	Adaptive testing is used to set appropriate targets for individual learners
<b>Ensure feedback leads to improvement</b>	Feedback is prompt, constructive and supportive, identifying achievements as well as failings	Feedback is used to improve future performance	Learners and staff participate in dialogue about feedback	Learners actively reflect on their feedback
<b>Examples</b>	<p>Timing of assessed tasks ensures that feedback on previous work is received in time to be used for the next task</p> <p>Generic feedback eg 'frequently occurring problems' is given in advance of a task</p>	<p>Feedback contains pointers for future improvement (feed forward)</p> <p>Feedback is available online so learners can easily store it and refer to it in future</p> <p>Feedback is clearly linked to the stated learning outcomes</p> <p>Learners have opportunities to gain feedback by means other than their teacher eg peer-to-peer activities and online tools/quizzes</p>	<p>Learners are offered the opportunity to identify specific aspects of their work they would like feedback on</p> <p>Learners are asked to find examples of feedback they found useful and explain how they acted on it</p> <p>Learners use class time to identify action points for the next assessed task based on their feedback</p>	<p>Staff regularly have meaningful discussions about what 'good' feedback looks like</p> <p>The grade for an assignment is not released until the learner has given a response to the tutor feedback</p> <p>Learners self-assess their own work and teachers provide feedback on the self-assessment as well as the assignment.</p> <p>All students have an e-PLP (personalised learning plan) or e-ILP (individual learning plan) enabling them to share reflections on achievements, and action plans with teachers and peers</p>

Teaching practice and learner support				
Provider focused			Learner focused	
Good practice principle	First steps	Emerging	Established	Enhanced
<b>Develop independent learners</b>	Learning tasks are designed to motivate learners and show early evidence of progress	Learners are encouraged to develop good study habits and provided with tools to help	Learners are well able to monitor their own progress	Learners are able to set their own goals and measure progress towards them
<b>Examples</b>	<p>Learning tasks are structured so they have a progressive level of difficulty</p> <p>Learning tasks are aligned so learners have adequate opportunities to practice skills before work is graded</p> <p>Digital tools are used to motivate learners appropriately - sometimes this means making learning more fun eg games, competitions etc</p>	<p>Learners can access online quizzes and self-assessments that give feedback on their answers</p> <p>Learning about formative and summative assessment and feedback is part of study skills for all</p> <p>Learners are aware of risk factors eg attendance / missed deadlines with online tools to help them track their own performance</p>	<p>Opportunities for self and peer assessment are offered</p> <p>Learners keep a digital learning journal or e-portfolio using digital images and audio as well as / instead of text to record progress</p> <p>Learners can acquire open badges as evidence of achievement</p>	<p>Learners assess their performance against their own learning goals rather than the performance of others</p> <p>Learners draw up their own work plan for a complex task defining milestones and deliverables (marks can be awarded for delivering to the plan)</p> <p>Learners are able to use digital tools for academic integrity checking to support development of writing skills and avoid plagiarism</p>
<b>Track progress in order to offer appropriate support</b>	Teaching staff have access to an online record of learner progress	Learners have online access to a record of their own progress	All staff and learners have access to a single source of online data recording learner progress against all assessment criteria	All staff, learners and employers (where relevant) have access to the single source of online data about learner progress
<b>Examples</b>	Staff use digital tools (eg spreadsheets) to keep a record of each learner's progress against all assessment criteria	<p>Learners are able to view the digital record of their progress against learning objectives for the course</p> <p>Learners are able to view the digital record of their performance as regards attendance, punctuality, meeting deadlines etc</p>	<p>All staff and learners have access to data showing all of a learner's feedback in one place</p> <p>Ongoing tracking supplies predicted grades which can be used to improve individual learner performance</p> <p>Learners are involved in monitoring and reflecting on their own learning through individual learning journals or e-portfolios</p>	<p>All relevant information about a learner is online in one place eg attendance and punctuality, marks and feedback, tutorial records, learning targets, assessments calendar, timetable, additional support records etc</p> <p>Learners, employers and college/ provider staff have an online 'dashboard' to support progress tracking</p> <p>The single source of online data recording learner progress is integrated with the tools used for marking</p>
<b>Promote learner employability (or self-employment)</b>	Vocational relevance is built into assessment	Learners are assessed on digital skills and capabilities and wider employability skills as well as their ability to use specific tools	Digital tools are used to simulate authentic work environments and situations for assessment purposes	At the end of their course all learners have digital literacy skills appropriate to their level of study and vocational context
<b>Examples</b>	Learners undertake assessed tasks using digital tools relevant to appropriate vocational contexts	<p>Learning activities and assessment are designed with wider skills development in mind. There are consistent approaches to promoting skills such as maths, english and communication and to correcting errors</p> <p>Learners can present a range of digital evidence of their achievement eg images, videos etc</p>	<p>Teachers are up to date and proficient in the technologies in use in their vocational context and build their use into assessments</p> <p>Assignments build skills needed in the workplace eg writing patient information leaflets for a health worker role rather than an essay</p> <p>Learners use a personal online space to present their achievements to employers</p>	<p>Use of digital tools makes it easy to assess group work and give grades and feedback for individual contributions</p> <p>Effective use is made of peer review using digital tools</p> <p>Effective use is made of professional networks on social media as a means of providing feedback to learners on work in progress</p>

Management and administration				
Digital options				Digital first
Good practice principle	First steps	Emerging	Established	Enhanced
<b>Leadership champions good assessment and feedback practice</b>	The particular importance of assessment and feedback in delivering effective learning and teaching is recognised at senior level	There are a clear set of principles underlying the learning providers' approach to assessment and feedback	There are appropriate mechanisms for evaluating innovative approaches and transitioning effective practices into mainstream delivery	The climate is one where innovative approaches to using digital technologies to enhance assessment and feedback practice are encouraged
<b>Examples</b>	The strategic plan covers assessment and feedback practice	There is management support for piloting new approaches	<p>Governance is in place to ensure business process change and investment in technical infrastructure where this is needed to support improved assessment and feedback practice</p> <p>There is a roadmap for consistent adoption of good practice across multiple sites/following mergers</p>	<p>All learners benefit from good use of technology enhanced assessment regardless of where learning and assessment takes place and who is teaching them</p> <p>There are mechanisms in place for evaluating learning analytics and using this information to inform future planning</p>
<b>Support staff in using digital tools for assessment and feedback</b>	Some staff development materials are available but their use is optional	Most teaching staff undertake staff development in using technology for assessment and feedback	All teaching staff undertake staff development in using technology for assessment and feedback	All teaching staff are confident in designing learning experiences that make use of technology, using technology to deliver checkpoints (formative assessment) and using technology to monitor learning progress
<b>Examples</b>	<p>Optional self-directed learning materials are available for teaching staff to use</p> <p>At a glance guidance on using the available technology is available in all teaching rooms</p>	Technical support is readily available during teaching sessions	There are dedicated staff providing training and technical support	<p>Use of technology in assessment and feedback practice is written into job descriptions and person specifications for teaching staff</p> <p>Use of technology in assessment and feedback is embedded in staff appraisal</p>
<b>Manage staff and learner workload effectively</b>	Teaching is planned in a co-ordinated fashion across the organisation	Learners are given tools and support to manage their time	A range of online tools are used to deliver efficiencies in assessment and feedback	A range of online tools are used to deliver business process efficiencies
<b>Examples</b>	<p>Staff use online schedules to help avoid 'assessment bunching'</p> <p>Good use is made of generic feedback/FAQs to save staff time answering individual queries</p>	<p>Learners can see all of their assignment details online to help them plan their time</p> <p>Feedback to learners is sufficiently timely to inform the next task</p>	<p>Good use is made of self-assessment in learners' own time eg by use of online tools and quizzes and online competitions between learners</p> <p>Learner response systems are used to provide dynamic feedback in class and help staff focus their teaching</p> <p>Detailed marking and feedback is supplemented by other forms of recognition such as badges</p>	<p>A full online overview of assessment schedules is used to help manage staff and learner workload and avoid unmanageable peaks on administrative support and IT systems</p> <p>Peer review is used to give learners timely feedback</p> <p>Administrative tasks are automated wherever possible (see principle on efficient business processes)</p>

## Management and administration

### Digital options

➔ Digital first

Good practice principle	First steps	Emerging	Established	Enhanced
<b>Use digital tools to support quality assurance of the assessment process</b>	Digital tools are used to cut out known sources of error	Digital tools facilitate a joined up approach to managing assessment records	Assessment records are 'digital first' and can be shared with all involved in quality assurance	Digital records are analysed to improve individual and organisational performance
<b>Examples</b>	<p>An action plan exists to phase out paper-based processes to cut out hand-written forms and rekeying of information as sources of error</p> <p>Learners and teachers are educated about how to avoid plagiarism in a digital world</p> <p>There is a clear policy for identifying and dealing with plagiarism</p>	<p>There is an online record of every assignment</p> <p>The online record of an assignment is mapped against the performance criteria for a qualification unit</p> <p>Online scoring rubrics are used where appropriate</p> <p>Digital text matching tools are used to support teachers identifying where work has been plagiarised</p>	<p>Digital tools provide a full audit trail of marking and feedback</p> <p>External verifiers have ready online access to all assignments and feedback</p>	<p>Digital tools are used to audit staff marking and feedback and the outcomes are used in staff development</p> <p>Monitoring and analysis of cases of plagiarism supports improved guidance for learners</p> <p>Assessment design makes plagiarism extremely difficult - tasks require learners to think for themselves and surface the process of learning</p>
<b>Develop efficient business processes</b>	Limited use of digital tools for submission, marking, feedback and online testing	Increasing use of digital tools for submission, marking, feedback and online testing	Regular and widespread use of digital tools for submission, marking, feedback and online testing	Use of digital tools for submission, marking, feedback and online testing is the norm with few exceptions
<b>Examples</b>	<p>Text-based assignments can be submitted online</p> <p>Digital tools are sometimes used for marking and feedback</p> <p>Online testing takes place only when required by awarding organisations</p> <p>Some learners' work is securely stored in digital format</p>	<p>Many types of assignment can be submitted online</p> <p>Digital tools are routinely used for marking and feedback</p> <p>Online testing is sometimes used to support learners' formative development</p> <p>Much learners' work is securely stored in digital format</p> <p>There is no duplication of process eg paper and online copies existing in parallel</p>	<p>Most types of assignment are submitted online</p> <p>Digital tools are used for marking and feedback with very few exceptions</p> <p>Online testing is regularly used to support learners' formative development</p> <p>Most learners' work is securely stored in digital format</p> <p>It is easy to manage access permissions for teachers and internal verifiers to view learners' digital evidence</p>	<p>Online submission is normal practice for all assignments (including a digital record where there is no physical artefact being assessed eg a dance performance)</p> <p>Online marking and feedback is normal practice for all assignments</p> <p>All learners' work is securely stored in digital format</p> <p>It is easy to manage access permissions for teachers, internal and external verifiers and employers to view learners' digital evidence</p> <p>Learners can opt to allow others eg potential employers or other learners to view pieces of work</p>

# Assessment for learning: review your practice

Teaching practice and learner support		
Criterion	Strengths	Areas for improvement
Help all learners understand the requirements and standards for each set task		
Support the personalised needs and preferences of learners		
Ensure feedback leads to improvement		
Develop independent learners		
Track progress in order to offer appropriate support		
Promote learner employability (or self employment)		

Management and administration		
Criterion	Strengths	Areas for improvement
Leadership champions good assessment and feedback practice		
Support staff in using digital tools for assessment and feedback		
Manage staff and learner workload effectively		
Use digital tools to support quality assurance of the assessment process		
Develop efficient business processes		

# Assessment for learning: scorecard

Teaching practice and learner support					
Criterion	First steps	Emerging	Established	Enhanced	Evidence to support this judgement
Help all learners understand the requirements and standards for each set task					
Support the personalised needs and preferences of learners					
Ensure feedback leads to improvement					
Develop independent learners					
Track progress in order to offer appropriate support					
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Management and administration					
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Develop efficient business processes					