THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Learning and Teaching Conference
2025

‘Transformative Assessment and Feedback’

Tuesday 17th June 2025, **in-person at Nucleus, King's Buildings**

Conference Programme

For all enquiries, please contact: lt.conference@ed.ac.uk

Further information is available on our website:
University of Edinburgh Learning & Teaching Conference | Institute for Academic Development

Contents

In-Person Schedule

*Please note: all sessions from the Larch Lecture Theatre (including keynotes and poster pitches) and Oak Lecture Theatre will be live streamed from Nucleus for online delegates.

Key:

PA	Programme level assessment
AA	Authentic assessment
AL	Assessment & feedback literacy
CA	Compassionate assessment and feedback
CO	Co-creation and student voice
INV	Innovation and technological opportunities
INC	Inclusive assessment

08:30-09:30	**Registration with tea, coffee, and refreshments**		Ground Floor and Alder Lecture Theatre
09:30-10:00	**Welcomes:** Professor Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal (Students) and Professor Tina Harrison, Deputy Vice Principal Students (Enhancement): Launch of Learning & Teaching Strategy		Oak Lecture Theatre
10:00-10:45	**Keynote talk**: "Student agency and engagement in assessment in a time of AI" Professor Tansy Jessop Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students, University of Bristol.		Oak Lecture Theatre
10:45-11:00	**Poster Pitches**		Oak Lecture Theatre
11:00-11:30	**Morning Break: Tea, coffee, and refreshments** **Posters & Exhibition stands**		Ground Floor and Alder Lecture Theatre
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	Panel: Authentic assessment in practice: Keeping it real and making an impact (Su Goopy, Elaine Mowat, Shane Sheehan, Sophie Marion de Proce, Brittany Blankinship, Franziska McManus, Nicola Cooper) **Panel:** Reconsidering assessment in HE in the era of Gen-AI – Ongoing lessons in School of Mathematics (Kit Daniel Searle, Ozan Evkaya, Charlotte Desvages, Rónán Sweeney McCarron)	AA INV	Larch Lecture Theatre
	Demonstration: STEM e-assessment: showcasing the use of STACK? (Konstantina Zerva, Hayden Maudsley-Barton) **Demonstration:** Can LEARN topple STACK (Josh Fogg) **Demonstration:** Empowering students through Peer Feedback with a specialised platform: the use case of Peerceptiv (Elena Ioannidou, Elliot Crowley and Eddie Dubourg)	INV	Hawthorn Studio Classroom
	Demonstration: Co-constructing transformative assessment: exploring zine-making and presentation in collaborative formative assessment (Sarah Ward, Tjits Powell, Mikailah Henderson, Sana Nisar)	CO	Rowan Studio Classroom
	Demonstration: Implementing skills-based grading in a pre-hons linguistics course (Itamar Kastner, Abby Anderson, Sylvia Parma, Mate Varadi)	CA	

	Presentation: Implementation of Programme Level Assessment (PLA): Perspectives from inside and out with Edinburgh (Patrick Walsh) **Presentation:** Empowering interdisciplinary learners: Innovative Programme-Level assessments for real-world impact in Oncology education (Alessandra Livigni) **Presentation:** Staff engaging with student reflective portfolios: A useful resource for formative assessment in large courses (Alison Cullinane and Abby Cabrelli)	PA	Oak Lecture Theatre
	Presentation: Authentic assessment in online PGT programmes (Aileen Jordan, Rob Thomas) **Presentation:** Transformative assessment for transformative educators: Practices that shape activist teachers (ML White) **Presentation:** Outreach authentic assessment and OER legacy (Stephanie Charlie Farley) **Presentation:** Using Xerte for Authentic Assessment in a Postgraduate Course on Online Language Learning (Juan José Miranda, Jamie Auld Smith)	AA	Yew Lecture Theatre
12:45 - 13.45	**Lunch Break**		Ground floor and Alder Lecture Theatre
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	Panel: Principles of embedding sustainability in assessment: inclusivity and authenticity (Lucy Patterson, Victoria Tait, Helen Szoor-McElhinney, Georgie Ducasi) **Panel:** The evolution of assessment and feedback in online courses which tackle global challenges (Lauren Johnston Smith, Melissa Highton, Liz Grant)	AA INC	Larch Lecture Theatre
	Demonstration: Enhancing an open-source tool to improve efficiency and fairness in groupwork assessment (Nikhen Sanjaya Nyo, Cristina Alexandru, Aurora Constantin) **Demonstration:** A tool to assist reviewing programme and course level assessment (Stephen Warrington, Vivian So) **Demonstration:** The Virtual Ward - medical ward round simulator: an AI powered application for learning and feedback (Steven McCarthy)	AA PA INV	Hawthorn Studio Classroom
	Presentation: Thinking outside the box – adapting assessment environments for disabled students (Jean O'Donoghue, Chris Mowat, Jenny Green, Greta Elliot, Fizzy Abou Jawad, Kirsten West) **Presentation:** Supporting the next generation of Biological Science professionals: How a reflective portfolio influences student academic success and career aspirations (Christina Butt, Alison Cullinane) **Presentation:** Toward embedding accessibility in Higher Education through Curriculum Transformation: Perspectives from a PTAS Grant (Xingran Ruan, Aurora Constantin, Tracey Madden, Joanna Alexjuk, Cristina Alexandru, Jon Turner)	INC PA INC	Rowan Studio Classroom
	Presentation: The role of generative AI in research project self-assessment (Michael Petersen) **Presentation:** Enhancing peer feedback quality in MarkEd (Tomas Maillo, Cristina Alexandru, Aurora Constantin)	AL AL	Oak Lecture Theatre
	Presentation: Perspectives from a PTAS Project on understanding and shaping Generative AI integration in Computer Science Education (Pavlos	INV	

	Andreadis, Cristina Alexandru, Judy Robertson, Stuart King, Aurora Constantin, Vidminas Vizgirda)		
	Presentation: Assessing your assessment: using AI to test the robustness of your assessments against generative AI (Jobran Chebib)	INV	
	Presentation: Introducing TILT: Assessment strategies in the Toolkit for Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching (David Overend)	AA	Yew Lecture Theatre
	Presentation: Learning in health and wellbeing through assessed reflection and group work (Deb Holt, Colin Brough) **Presentation:** Mapping competencies and nurturing professional practice through digital portfolios (Jamie Auld Smith, Juan Jose Miranda)	AA	
	Presentation: Negotiated community assessment: A decolonising approach to compassionate assessment practices (Mary Collacott, Beth Christie)	CA	
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	Demonstration: Assessment transparency – A demonstration of approaches to share assessment expectations with students (Gary Standiger, Brodie Runciman) **Demonstration:** Unifying marking scheme within feedback and simplifying rubric grades for best practice (Daniel Orejon)	AL	Hawthorn Studio Classroom
	Presentation: Student engagement and partnership in assessment and feedback (Catherine Bovill, Megan Brown) **Presentation:** Staff-student co-creation of authentic assessment for PGT courses: The case of the "Curriculum: Context, Change and Development" group assessment (Jingyi Li, Lianya Qiu, Jiyuan Song) **Presentation:** Co-creating an assessment that promotes collaborative learning (Patricia Castro Sánchez, Achim Schnaufer, Zoe Dearness, Linzhi Huang, Abigail Strath, Emma Curry, Priscila Xin Yi)	CO	Rowan Studio Classroom
	Panel: Embedding Generative AI: Enhancing course feedback dynamics (Lin Watson, Javier Tejera, Hermione Hague, Pavlos Andreadis, Mteeve Amugune, Jane Alexander)	INV	Oak Lecture Theatre
	Presentation: Bridging wellbeing and academic success: Innovations in assessment and feedback design (Justine Maclean, Sarah MacIsaac, Fraser Clark, Ben Gordon)	CO	Yew Lecture Theatre
	Presentation: A wire-framed creative assessment for agency, belonging and joyful learning (Heather McQueen, Elise Darmon, Alison Cullinane)	INC	
16:05-16.50	**Closing Panel:** "Students' experiences of innovative assessment in practice"- Professor Tina Harrison and student panel		
16.50-17.00	**Closing remarks:** Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students, and Professor Tina Harrison		Oak Lecture Theatre
17.00-18.30	**Networking and Drinks Reception**		(Seating area by careers service/outside balcony)

Online (Live stream) Schedule

Online delegates can join us for the whole day via **two live-stream** options:

1) **Oak Lecture Theatre** - welcome talks, keynote speech, poster pitches, panel sessions, presentations and closing panel.

2) **Larch Lecture Theatre** – panel sessions and presentations during the breakout sessions.

Participants are **free to enter, leave and re-enter** the live-streams whenever they want, so you do not need to commit yourself to a single live-stream for the entire day.

The Teams Chat function will be enabled and moderated by a member of the Conference team - so please do engage with your fellow online delegates. However, online delegates will not be able to ask questions to in-person presenters.

The live-streams can be accessed through the Conference MS Teams Team Channels:

Larch Lecture Theatre: Larch Channel

Oak Lecture Theatre: Oak Channel

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Abstracts

Keynote talk: **"Student agency and engagement in assessment in a time of AI"**

Professor Tansy Jessop (Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students, The University of Bristol)

Evidence from TESTA shows that there are problems in the 'grammar' of assessment that get in the way of students exercising their agency and engaging deeply with tasks. Students often feel assessment is done to them, and fail to see its wider purpose and relevance, or to find space and time to take pride in their work. In this context, they may trade agency for the efficiency of AI. Drawing on theories of alienation and engagement, this interactive session will explore practical assessment and feedback ideas to use across programmes to nurture agency, foster curiosity, develop human skills, and surprisingly, enable students to have more fun. By focusing on authentic and relational dimensions of assessment and feedback across programmes, I will argue that we can find better ways to assess students than retreating into closed book exams.

Bio: Tansy Jessop is Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students at the University of Bristol, where she has led a programme of curriculum enhancement to re-imagine the design of programmes and assessment. Her experience of leading 'Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment' (TESTA) is the inspiration for her recent book which offers fresh perspectives about the relationship between assessment and feedback and students' experience of alienation, agency, and engagement. Tansy worked at the universities of Solent and Winchester before joining Bristol. Outside of work, she can be found walking Teddy, the family lab, jogging slowly, reading detective novels, and messing about in the kitchen.

Closing Panel: "Students' experiences of innovative assessment in practice"

Professor Tina Harrison and Student Speaker bios:

Tina Harrison is Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement) and Professor of Financial Services Marketing and Consumption. Tina is passionate about teaching quality and enhancing the student learning experience and has a keen interest in promoting effective, student-centred assessment practices that support meaningful learning and success.

Amrita Bains is a current Master's student at the Edinburgh Futures Institute studying an exciting interdisciplinary degree in Education Futures. Prior to this, she has worked in low-income communities within Mumbai to support equitable and quality educational outcomes for learners across age groups. As a School Representative of EFI, she has worked in multiple forums to enhance the student experience and assessment practices across schools within the University. An avid philosopher from a young age, Amrita seeks meaning and purpose in everything she does! She enjoys reading, yoga and meditation within her spare time.

Esther Bull is a geophysics and meteorology student about to begin her integrated masters degree with a focus on renewable energy, particularly geothermal systems. She is passionate about science communication and making science accessible, with the goal of inspiring the next generation of scientists.

Robbie Carnegie is currently studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh and has recently completed his fifth year. He began his studies at the University of St Andrews where he developed a particular interest in medical education, especially in clinical skills teaching and widening participation. Outside of medicine, he is an avid runner and enjoys social runs followed by coffee.

Maggie Livingstone has just finished her 5th year at medical school. She is interested in medical education, near peer

teaching and widening participation. Outside of medical school, she enjoys being outdoors and exploring new places.

Imogen McCall is a first-year student studying Interdisciplinary Futures. She is interested in how policy interacts with STEM subjects, particularly in data-driven decision-making and the intersection of politics and cybersecurity. She enjoys learning computer skills, and in her free time, she is learning R and the technical aspects of cybersecurity.

Frederik Madsen is a PhD student in the School of GeoSciences, and is the school's tutor and demonstrator and representative. In his PhD, he researches the Earth's core by investigating how sudden changes in the Earth's magnetic field – so-called geomagnetic jerks – affect the length of a day. Alongside his research, he spends a lot of time improving his teaching practices within the school, and is heavily involved in the school's outreach and widening participation programmes.

Eliza Tompson moved to Scotland in September 2024, from Sydney, Australia, to pursue a Master of Public Health. She is the elected postgraduate taught representative for the Deanery of Genetic, Molecular and Population health, and sits on the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine Education Committee, Usher Institute Education Committee and College Modernisation Steering Group.

Sessions

Break Out Session 1

Presentation: Assessment literacy for staff and students: Making the implicit explicit! (Elizabeth

Stevenson)

How many university teaching staff could give an 'off the cuff' presentation about assessment literacy right now? Certainly not everyone.
How many students are familiar with the term assessment literacy and can use the ideas to guide their study, prepare their assignments, understand their marks and feedback and utilise marks and feedback effectively to develop their learning? Probably even fewer students.
Is an explanation of assessment literacy an essential aspect of staff training and student induction?
Not often.

This presentation highlights the value of being explicit with teaching staff and students about what assessment literacy encompasses (Price et. al, 2012) how it is of value to be assessment literate and ways in which to introduce the ideas of assessment literacy into staff training and into ongoing conversations with students.

The examples are drawn from my own reflections on teaching and in leading a teaching team of around 10 individuals who deliver teaching on two MScs for around 25 full-time and 30 part-time students per annum for over 10 years.

The presentation will explore the relevance of assessment literacy for staff in areas such as marking student work (of course), assessment design and for course and programme design and delivery (Price et.al, 2010)

The presentation will reflect on student perception of assessment, often from the student perspective of not fully understanding how marks and feedback are assigned, not understanding assessment criteria and being able to use them effectively to develop their submissions. (Rust et.al., 2003).

I will share some suggestions for introducing the ideas of assessment literacy into staff training and student development and highlight the pitfalls of assuming shared knowledge and understanding of assessment.

Price, M., Rust, C., O'Donovan, B., Handley, K. and Bryant, R. *Assessment Literacy: The foundation of improving student learning.* (The Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, 2012).

Price, M., Carroll, J., O'Donovan, B., and Rust, C. (2010). If I was going there I wouldn't start from here: a critical commentary on current assessment practice. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *36*(4), 479–492. https://doi-org.eux.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/02602930903512883

Rust, C., Price, M. and O'Donovan, B. (2003). Improving Students' Learning by Developing their Understanding of Assessment Criteria and Processes. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *28*(2), 147–164. https://doi-org.eux.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/02602930301671

Presentation: Enhancing feedback literacy through a comparison approach to formative assessment (Jane Hislop, Janette Jamieson)

Engaging learners in taking an active role in feedback is recognised as an important aspect of assessment for learning (Carless and Boud, 2018). One approach to actively engage learners in their own feedback is through a comparison approach, where learners compare their work with that of other students to generate their own internal feedback. This comparison approach to feedback is based on the work of Nicol (2020) and involves students engaging in peer and self-assessment. This approach was successfully incorporated into the formative assignments of our online MSc in Clinical Education programme in 2021.

In this presentation we will discuss our programme team's reflections on this initiative four years on. We will outline the lessons learned in relation to the necessary preparatory groundwork that is essential when considering designing comparison approaches to peer and self-assessment. This groundwork has included creating opportunities for shared discussion to allow for scaffolding a shared understanding of the rationale and rules of engagement for peer feedback. In addition, we will also discuss the importance of relationship building with and between students to create a psychologically safe and collegiate environment for learners to be able to safely engage and benefit from this approach.

We will also discuss our reflections from 14 semi-structed interviews with our students, who are both clinicians and educators, on their experiences of this approach to feedback and why this could be beneficial for learners across disciplines. The direct benefits relate to learners' developing their own feedback literacy, through giving and receiving feedback from peers who offer different perspectives on their own work asnd being able to view the work of others so that the learners see and reflect on how others have approached their assignments. This in turn creates opportunities for self-regulation of learning and enhancement of their own self-criticality. The indirect benefits have come through the trust and community building with both faculty and their peers, that comes from engagement in these formative assessment activities.

Presentation: Evaluating smart online worksheets as an assessment in practical chemistry courses (Benjamin Arenas, Amanda Jarvis)

Laboratory work is an essential part of a chemistry degree program, and the traditional assessment for practical chemistry courses are written reports. These can sometimes be overly time-consuming for students to produce, taking time away from other course-based activities such as tutorial preparation, often have a high marking workload, given the large numbers of students on these courses, lack assessment diversity, which could disadvantage particular sets of students, and are often viewed as an all-or-nothing summative assessment in which the grade for a piece of work is based on one attempt.

This talk will explore the use of smart online worksheets as an assessment method in the physical chemistry laboratory component of the courses Chemistry 2 and Chemistry for Chemical Physics 2 and the practical course in Biological Chemistry 2. Developed alongside industry collaborators at LearnSci (www.learnsci.com), the worksheets act as a replacement to traditional written report assessments. The aims of these worksheets were to provide students with immediate feedback (and marks) during the real-time analysis of their results, streamline the marking workload by reducing demonstrator time spent on marking, and scaffold the development of skills such how to interpret results and how to structure critical discussions.

Following a short briefing on the design of the worksheets, the findings of a student evaluation survey (ongoing at the time of writing the abstract) will be discussed. The areas investigated include the students' perceptions of the worksheets, a comparison of completing the worksheets to producing written reports, and the effect of the worksheets on teaching skills mentioned previously, including those centred on data analysis and drawing relevant conclusions from results. The talk will conclude with a summary of the lessons learnt from the project, which will contribute to how these assessments are used in the future of these courses as well as how they might be implemented in other courses.

Presentation: Beyond traditional marking: introducing specifications grading to a final-year course in mathematical biology (Nikola Popovic, Steven O'Hagan, Paola Iannone)

Traditional grading approaches in undergraduate mathematics often do not accurately reflect students' grasp of the material, typically rewarding partial understanding without encouraging holistic comprehension or iterative improvement. To address these shortcomings, we modified the homework assignment regime for the Level 10 course "Mathematical Biology (MATH10013)", which is typically taken by final-year students in the School of Mathematics, for the academic year 2023-24 by introducing a form of specifications grading on the basis of the EMRN Rubric: written homework was marked as "Excellent/Exemplary" (E), "Meets Expectations" (M), "Revision Needed" (R), or "Not Assessable" (N). A key feature of the modified regime was the revision and resubmission of work: we gave students the opportunity to resubmit their revised work, thus incentivising them to meet high standards and to act directly upon feedback provided by markers. Equally, we aimed to encourage markers to focus on assessing the holistic quality of students' submissions, and on providing constructive pointers for their revision, rather than on assigning grades.

Overall, we felt that the introduction of specifications grading to the course largely met its aims, resulting in increased student engagement and peer collaboration, as well as in demonstrably improved understanding of the

course material. Challenges included an increase in workload for both students and markers due to the submission-resubmission cycle, as well as a mismatch in the perceived purpose of homework assignments between students and the teaching team, with students feeling insufficiently rewarded at times for the effort they had invested.

In this presentation, we will discuss some of the benefits and challenges of the changes made to the assignment regime, as perceived by both students and the teaching team, and we will attempt a comparison with more traditional modes of assessment. Finally, we will propose mitigating measures for some of these challenges, many of which may be due to the novelty of the approach within the School of Mathematics.

Panel: Authentic assessment in practice: Keeping it real and making an impact (Su Goopy, Elaine Mowat, Shane Sheehan, Sophie Marion de Proce, Brittany Blankinship, Franziska McManus, Nicola Cooper)

The panel explores the critical role of innovative and sustainable teaching practices in developing and delivering authentic assessments within master's level courses. As higher education evolves, there is an increasing necessity to align assessments with real-world applications, ensuring that students are not only absorbing knowledge but also applying it in meaningful ways.
The panel brings together teachers and students to offer multiple perspectives showcasing approaches that embrace dynamic learning environments and support deeper understanding and skill application in course content and assessments. We begin with an overview of innovative teaching practices developed within and across the Data Driven Innovation Health and Social Care Talent Team at the Usher Institute: pen and paper learning, experiential learning, and digital integration, highlighting their impact on student engagement and critical thinking and the realisation of assessment that is authentic.

Sustainability in teaching is also examined, focusing on the importance of resource-efficient practices and long-term educational impact. Panelists discuss strategies for embedding sustainability into curricular design, which promotes enduring educational value and prompts joining up of learnings with real-world experiences via well considered assessments that not only measure but also invite students to engage with their own current or future professional practices.

The panel delves into the design and implementation of authentic assessments, showcasing examples of how assessments can prepare students for professional success. This includes the integration of interdisciplinary approaches and collaboration. Emphasis is placed on the role of technology in facilitating these assessments, balancing innovative digital tools with sustainable practices. Sustainable feedback mechanisms will be discussed as essential components of authentic assessment, providing students with constructive insights while preserving academic integrity.

Attendees will gain insights into creating impactful assessments that are innovative and sustainable, ensuring that master's level programmes remain relevant and rigorous. Through a blend of presentation and interactive discussion, this session aims to inspire educators to rethink traditional assessment models and embrace a future-oriented approach.

Panel: Reconsidering Assessment in HE in the era of Gen-AI – Ongoing lessons in School of Mathematics (Kit Daniel Searle, Ozan Evkaya, Charlotte Desvages, Rónán Sweeney McCarron)

With the recent rapid development of Generative AI (Gen-AI), discussions about the impact of AI on teaching and learning have been developing. Starting in 2024, universities started to develop guidance for Gen-AI but in doing so, pointed out concerns regarding academic integrity and the need for assessment re-consideration. Specifically, the pendulum between the naysayers and the enthusiasts resulted in different strategies for the use of Gen-AI in teaching and assessment, reflected by the different approaches adopted by academic staff in the School of Mathematics (SoM).

In this panel discussion, we bring together two educators who adopted opposing strategies for managing AI in teaching and assessment of problem-solving tasks, and a student who was enrolled in both courses. We will start with a summary of the SoM's Gen-AI policy and give an overview of ongoing work conducted by the Technology Enhanced Mathematical Sciences Education (TEMSE) research group. We will discuss surveys addressing attitudes of students towards Gen-AI usage in assessment. The panelists will then discuss their strategies in more detail, both from lecturer and student perspectives. The overall objective of the panel is to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of each approach, considering course-specific practices and lecturer experiences.

Panel Schedule:
Opening Remarks (5 minutes)
(Session Chair) Ozan Evkaya:
Welcome attendees and introduce the focus of the panel.
Panelist Presentations (15 minutes)
Speaker 1 (Kit Searle): Supporting the use of Gen-AI in a MSc course.
Speaker 2 (Charlotte Desvages): Discouraging the use of Gen-AI in introductory programming courses.
Speaker 3 (Rónán Sweeney McCarron): Student discusses their perceptions on the use of AI.
Audience Q&A (10 minutes)
Open the floor to questions from the audience.

Demonstration: STEM e-assessment: showcasing the use of STACK? (Konstantina Zerva, Hayden Maudsley-Barton)

Digitalization is increasingly vital across all areas of education, particularly through Computer-aided assessment (CAA), and is significantly enhancing students' learning experiences.

At the School of Mathematics our main tool for e-assessments is the STACK (System for Teaching and Assessment using a computer algebra Kernel) software. STACK is a leading open-source online assessment system for mathematics and STEM, which was mainly developed at the University of Edinburgh by Prof Chris Sangwin and used internationally.

With STACK, we brought all e-assessment in-house and students have a consistent experience throughout their degree program. Students benefit from immediate feedback, consistent marking criteria and the opportunity of repeated practice on randomly generated questions. Teaching staff save time on marking repetitive problems, without worrying about feedback deadlines, allowing them to focus on higher-level tasks and provide detailed feedback.

STACK is also used by other schools at the University of Edinburgh, which have numerical or programmatic content, such as Engineering, Physics and Informatics. Since 2018, the School of Mathematics and the Centre for Open Learning have developed fully online courses using STACK. In 2020-21, we created online workbooks for engineering mathematics, published as Open Educational Resources (OERs).

STACK is available to all university users through the STACK service, integrated with Blackboard Learn via LTI, ensuring no separate login is required.

In this demonstration, we will showcase the use of STACK.

Delivery plan: We will show a curated set of questions to demonstrate the wide range of functionality of STACK. This will give particular stress to the way that feedback is given for different responses. We will give attendants student access to a course with these questions to allow them to have a hands-on experience with STACK.

Learning objectives: We aim to demonstrate the benefits of STACK for learning and teaching, including increased feedback for students and reduced resources for providing this feedback. We will explore best practices and strategies for integrating STACK into existing educational frameworks.

Demonstration: Can LEARN topple STACK (Josh Fogg)

The Centre for Open Learning uses STACK (https://stack-assessment.org) for online, automated assessments in its maths and statistics courses. STACK has many great features including algebraic answers, randomised questions, and answer-specific feedback. This increases opportunities for formative feedback while saving teachers time on assessment marking. That said, the system comes with a steep learning curve for those who aren't familiar with coding or LaTeX. It can also pose issues for course secretaries in how it integrates (or doesn't) with other systems. At the Centre, time saved from using STACK was in all often lost addressing issues that occurred as a result.

This year, the Centre has started a refresh of its maths courses and the tools we use to deliver them. One question we wanted to answer was "are there platforms like STACK, but more approachable?". As one possible option, we experimented with Learn Ultra's improved 'test' content type. Many will be familiar with Blackboard Learn, a standard across the University of Edinburgh. The rollout of the 'Ultra' update wasn't smooth across the board, but it did bring some improvements. Included were refreshes of 'pools' and 'calculated formulas' and two tools which offer randomisation. Could these enable us to recreate what we've been doing in STACK in a straightforward way through Learn?

Through this demonstration we will show how questions of different types can be created in Ultra to mirror similar questions that would be asked in STACK. Example usage will highlight specific pitfalls we stumbled into along the way, and our experience with the platform more generally. Attendees should come away with an understanding of how mathematics work can be assessed through Ultra and have an awareness of the benefits and compromises of Ultra compared to STACK.

Demonstration: Empowering students through Peer Feedback with a specialised platform: the use case of Peerceptiv (Elena Ioannidou, Elliot Crowley and Eddie Dubourg)

Peer feedback has long been regarded as a powerful tool to improve student performance in higher education (Huismana et al., 2018). However, inducing students to produce helpful feedback comes with significant cognitive, behavioural and logistical challenges. Thus, the power of peer feedback remains underutilised in many areas of the university.

In this demonstration, we will look at how authentic peer assessment can be used to improve students' assessment and feedback literacy by using a specialised new platform called Peerceptiv. During the session, we will pinpoint the elements essential to conducting a successful peer feedback activity and how a specialised platform like Peerceptiv can facilitate this process.

Learning Objectives:
- Consider the challenges and key elements in a successful peer review activity
- Explore how a specialised platform can be utilised for innovative learning and integrated help with assessment

Delivery Plan:
- Lead-in: Warm up with an introduction of the practice of peer feedback and an audience poll to assess opinions and challenges in feedback and peer feedback.
- Present: A quick showcase of Peerceptiv and how it was used in Engineering
- Practice: Delegates access Peerceptiv and in groups, provide peer feedback to existing submissions on the topic of feedback and challenges
- Plenary discussion: Delegates share findings and observations

References:
B. Huisman, N. Saab, J. van Driel, P. van den Broek 2018. "Peer feedback on academic writing: Undergraduate students' peer feedback role, peer feedback perceptions and essay performance." In Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 43 (6) (2018), pp. 955-968. Doi: 10.1080/02602938.2018.1424318

Demonstration: Co-constructing transformative assessment: exploring zine-making and presentation in collaborative formative assessment (Sarah Ward, Tjits Powell, Mikailah Henderson, Sana Nisar)

This demonstration will take the form of a mini workshop, co-facilitated by Dr. Sarah Ward (Programme Director for MA Learning in Communities), Tjits Powell and Mikailah Henderson (2nd year students on MA Learning in Communities). The demonstration will showcase the co-construction of formative assessment using zines and small group feedback.

Zine-making offers a participant-led, DIY, collaborative and dialogic form of creative reflection, used to recognise and challenge power structures and to privilege non-elite agency. Using zines within small group learning scaffolds student reflection, from individual cognition and analysis to interactive exploration and reinterpretation, as others in the group feedback on the student's zine. Small group formative feedback helps to build student relationships, motivation and cognition through a supportive and critical process of dialogue. Embedding transformative formative assessment throughout a course offers the opportunity for students to challenge and expand their perspectives through an embedded process of questioning, reflection and reinterpretation, based on their learning.

This session will demonstrate how zine-making can be used as a tool by students in formative assessment and feedback, inviting students to capture and present theoretical understanding and reflection, and receive small-group student feedback. Drawing on experiences from the 2nd Year course 'Community Learning 2: Dialogue in Groups', we will reflect on how Mezirow's transformative learning theory can help to structure zine-making prompts and group feedback guidance.

Session Learning outcomes:

- Introduce the creation and use of zines as a tool in formative feedback
- Demonstrate the potential for perspective transformation through embedded participatory formative assessment

Delivery Plan:
0-5 mins: Introduction to session and staff/student team
5-15 mins: Zine creation and dialogue micro demonstration by 2nd year MALiC students
15-20 mins: Reflections on transformative assessment"

Demonstration: Implementing skills-based grading in a pre-hons linguistics course (Itamar Kastner, Abby Anderson, Sylvia Parma, Mate Varadi)

This demonstration explores the use of learning technology to implement a Skills-Based Grading approach, which has transformed assessment in the syntax block of our pre-honours linguistics course LEL2A: Linguistic Theory and the Structure of English (PPLS). The assessment changed from traditional grading to one which encourages students to reflect on their progression journey and achieve discrete skills.

The presentation looks at how the university's Virtual Learning Environment was set up to allow for this approach, considering what was successful, the advantages and limitations of the current technology, and what could be done in future iterations. We discuss how to further improve the process, encouraging student-focused and accessible assessment.

Delivery plan:
1. Introduction and context (CO Itamar Kastner)
- Skills-Based Grading
- CO's proposal to Learning Technology team and PhD student
2. Demonstration: learning technology (PPLS Learning Technologists)
- Our priorities of creating a compassionate, inclusive and accessible assessment process
- The process: proposed solutions, limitations, experimentation and chosen solution, as well as impact on affected groups
- What we wanted to achieve in Learn
- Walk-through of a Skills-Based Grading example from a student's point of view
- Future iterations and their links to skills frameworks
3. Discussion: tutors (PhD student Richard Wilson)
- Marking in the system
- Giving feedback to students
- The system's effect on tutorials
4. Conclusion (Itamar Kastner)
- Pedagogical considerations

Learning outcomes:
Participants will:
1. Understand the context behind Skills-Based Grading and why it was included in LEL2A to transform assessment and feedback.
2. Relate Learning Technology to pedagogical goals and an improved student experience.
3. Identify how Skills-Based Grading can be used for inclusive assessment.
4. Learn how the system works, how it can be implemented, and how it can be adapted to different needs.

Presentation: Implementation of Programme Level Assessment (PLA): Perspectives from inside and out with Edinburgh (Patrick Walsh)

As an institution we commonly award degrees for programmes rather than courses, yet our assessments and outcomes are most closely linked with individual courses. There is considerable appetite for changing and/or increasing the alignment of assessments with programmes both within and out with the University of Edinburgh. One strand of the Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP) is aiming to facilitate Schools to deliver on this "programme level assessment".

A challenge is that there are many definitions of programme level assessment. It is a term that means different things to different people and, in some cases, people use different terms to mean the same thing. Beyond understanding what programme level assessment is, there are a wide range of ways that it can be utilised and implemented.

This presentation aims to provide a working Edinburgh definition of programme level assessment; a potential framework for guiding and supporting Schools and programmes to implement programme level assessment; and some thought-provoking questions for the audience after presenting some examples and experiences with programme level assessment at our and other institutions. The experiences of programme level assessment are drawn from interviews with staff from 17 Schools at UoE and staff involved in the implementation of programmes at 10 different UK Universities.

The presented information is intended as context for a discussion with the audience about their opinions around PLA, that can start in the question session and continue asynchronously. For example, how transformative do we want (or need) to be to effectively implement PLA? What support or guidance would be most influential in facilitating programmes to broadly use PLA? In addition to hopefully stimulating peoples' thinking, this will inform the CTP strand working on this topic.

Presentation: Empowering interdisciplinary learners: Innovative Programme-Level assessments for real-world impact in Oncology education (Alessandra Livigni)

The MSc in Cancer Biology and Precision Oncology (CBPO) is a fully online programme that embodies a transformative approach to programme-level assessment (PLA). Designed to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation, our ethos focuses on uniting professionals from diverse backgrounds to drive progress in oncology. Our varied cohorts include researchers, clinicians, nurses, biomedical graduates, medical science liaisons, and even investment bankers.

The current PLA model emerged from a collaborative design process involving programme leadership, faculty members and educational technologists. The PLA is characterised by a range of assessments, including BlueSky essays, multimedia learning tools, infographics, research proposals, and impact abstracts. Students also participate in group assessments evaluating research papers and grant proposals and develop communication skills delivering lay abstracts and pitch meetings. Collaborative discussion boards further enhance peer learning and feedback. Each assessment method promotes the development of interdisciplinary expertise while ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for diverse professional backgrounds.

Our assessments emphasise real-world relevance and are designed to encourage critical thinking, collaboration, and innovative problem-solving. Each assessment is aligned to specific course learning outcomes while building toward programme-level competencies. For instance, infographics assess data interpretation and communication, while impact abstracts demonstrate real-world applications and prepare students to communicate effectively across disciplines. Discussion boards provide a platform for immediate, formative peer feedback, fostering dynamic idea exchange and a global learning community.

Innovation and technological advancements underpin our PLA approach. Tools such as Thinglink empower students to create annotated visual content, combining scientific rigour with creative expression. These technologies also support personalised learning paths, enabling students to engage with material in ways tailored to their professional contexts.

By diversifying assessment methods, fostering inclusivity, and harnessing technology, the CBPO programme exemplifies how PLA can develop experts ready to tackle complex, real-world challenges in oncology.

Presentation: Staff engaging with student reflective portfolios: A useful resource for formative assessment in large courses (Alison Cullinane and Abby Cabrelli)

In the School of Biological Sciences (SBS), reflective portfolios form a core component of the undergraduate curriculum across seven first and second-year courses (Cullinane 2024). These portfolios, defined as collections evidencing critical thought through writings and artifacts, encourage students to reflect on key aspects of their education and professional development (Driessen, 2017). Portfolios play a crucial role in tracking achievements, shifting the focus from exams as the sole indicator of success (Pagone & Primogerino, 2024). The assessed nature of these portfolios ensures that SBS students engage meaningfully with their content.

While substantial research highlights the benefits of portfolios for student engagement (e.g. Mello & Wattret, 2021), studies focusing on the advantages for staff who engage with these student reflections for their own development remains limited. In this presentation, we will describe how the portfolio designed in SBS have offered deep insights into students' perceptions of their learning experiences. We will summarise the findings from interviews conducted with academic staff, illustrating how they have used these insights garnered from the weekly reflections to recognise areas for pedagogical improvement, and how they adapt their teaching strategies and identify students undergoing academic and personal difficulties. As reflection and reflective practice are integral to the educational ethos at The University of Edinburgh, this work will be of interest to staff in other Schools who are considering the implementation of progamme level assessment and using similar reflective portfolios approaches.

Presentation: Authentic assessment in online PGT programmes (Aileen Jordan, Rob Thomas)

Authentic assessment aims to ensure that assignments are fit-for-purpose and align with professional activities which students might encounter in their working life, providing opportunity for development of professional skills alongside a critical understanding of the topic.

Within the Deanery of Biomedical Sciences (CMVM) there are a number of taught online postgraduate programmes. These include Global Health and Infectious Diseases; Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, Biodiversity Wildlife and Ecosystem Health, and International Animal Health. The students undertake the programmes part-time, with global cohorts consisting of multidisciplinary working professionals with non-standard, diverse backgrounds. The programme teams delivering the programmes strive to produce a range of authentic assessments which develop and enhance employment-related skills, such as preparation of grant proposals and policy briefs, parliamentary POSTnotes, book proposals, conference presentations and posters, World Health Assembly resolutions, and epidemiological reports based on real-life data. Student feedback indicates that whilst undertaking assignments that differ from standard academic assessments is challenging due to the novel nature of the activity, these assessments provide some of the most valuable learning experiences. This has been observed particularly in relation to assessments requiring production of policy briefs and WHA resolutions.

Through presentation of the range of programme assessments and student feedback with a focus on assessments which students have found particularly useful, alongside staff perspectives on these, this presentation aims to stimulate discussion on the nature and utility of authentic assessment and provide ideas for future assessments.

Presentation: Transformative assessment for transformative educators: Practices that shape activist teachers (ML White)

The MSc in Transformative Learning and Teaching is a two-year Initial Teacher Education programme, unique in Scotland for enabling beginning teachers to qualify with a Masters degree and the ability to teach across the primary/secondary transition. Rooted in a transformative agenda (Mezirow, 1997), the programme aspires to support learners to engage in transformative teaching and learning and develop graduates with an 'activist' orientation (Sachs, 2003)—equipped to explicitly tackle discrimination and disadvantage and shape educational practice.

Central to this transformative vision is our approach to assessment, which positions assessment as 'the most powerful lever teachers have to influence the way students respond to a course and behave as learners' (Gibbs 1999,41) and approach their professional learning. Designed to align with the programme's aims, our assessment philosophy emphasizes professionally authentic experiences that integrate theory and practice, sustainability in fostering lifelong learning habits, collaboration within and across university and school communities, and student-driven approaches that empower learners to take responsibility for their growth.

In this presentation, I will illustrate how these principles are enacted through specific assessment practices that foster the skills, habits, and attitudes essential for lifelong learning and professional adaptability. For example, professionally authentic tasks include co-designed projects with school mentors, while sustainable assessment practices focus on equipping students to self-assess and adapt to future professional challenges.

Drawing on student feedback and a self-study project, I will share insights into the impact of these assessment practices on students' learning journeys and their development as reflective, activist educators. In dialogue we will consider actionable strategies for designing transformative assessment practices that motivate learning, integrate theory and practice, and prepare students to meet their future learning needs.

Presentation: Outreach authentic assessment and OER legacy (Stephanie Charlie Farley)

This session will present our students' perspectives on how the 4th year undergraduate Geoscience Outreach (GO) course facilitates Authentic Assessment through community collaboration and project creation, alongside Practical Applicable Feedback of the assessed works to enable the development and creation of Open Education Resources (OER).

The course provides students with the opportunity to develop their own science communication and engagement projects as bespoke resources for external clients including charities, museums, teachers, and school pupils aged 3-18. Students receive assessment and feedback on their projects, and selected projects are further developed by summer OER Service interns to publish for educational re-use.

OER are one of the ways that the University shares knowledge and contributes towards the global commons in line with our mission for our graduates, and the knowledge we discover with our partners, make the world a better place, and that our teaching and research is relevant to society and we are diverse, inclusive and accessible to all.

Sharing the GO undergraduate student projects as OERs provides a legacy for the student project beyond assessment, allowing the original client and others to reuse and adapt the resource. In addition, the resources can be used by the students to showcase their ability to prospective employers or for application for future study.

The GO course and its use of authentic assessment activities provide students with grounded, practical experience that can be applied in future careers. The student projects have legacy with real-world impact in use with their client and potentially through publication as OER. Hear from GO students about their experience and how some have gone on to careers in scientific communication, media and education, and interdisciplinary and open education organisations, as a result of their outreach projects.

Presentation: Using Xerte for authentic assessment in a postgraduate course on Online Language Learning (Juan José Miranda, Jamie Auld Smith)

In this session, we will share our experience designing and delivering an authentic assessment for a master's-level Online Language Learning course in Moray House School of Education and Sport. PGT students designed their own online course using the open-source content-authoring tool Xerte, integrating pedagogical theory with practical course design skills.

The assessment required students to act as digital course designers, developing an interactive, pedagogically sound short course within a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to teach a language of their choice to a hypothetical cohort. They created digital materials, resources, communication elements, assessment strategies, and evaluation methods tailored to their learners. To ensure equitable access to a GDPR-compliant, accessible VLE, students used Xerte, a University-supported platform offering a robust yet flexible foundation for course development.

By engaging students in a contextualised, problem-oriented professional task, this approach aligned with authentic assessment and inclusive digital learning principles. It also fostered creative freedom while ensuring accessibility principles were applied. Using the Constructive Alignment Framework, the design integrated learning outcomes, activities, and assessment tasks to emphasise authenticity, process orientation, and learner-centred design. Collaboration between the Holyrood Learning Technology Team and the Course Organiser enabled students to develop functional courses within a University-supported VLE.

While Xerte offered robust features, students initially faced challenges, including technical barriers and varying confidence levels. These were addressed through targeted support such as workshops, exemplars, and peer learning. Through this process, students developed digital literacies, mastered multimodal material creation, applied accessibility principles, and explored gamification and AI-enhanced teaching tools.

The final product functioned as a professional portfolio, showcasing students' competencies for future employers. Examples from the 2023–24 cohort highlight the assessment's transformative potential, including courses on workplace language skills and gamified language teaching. This session will share lessons learned, demonstrating how authentic assessment fosters creativity, reflective practice, and professional development.

The 2024-25 cohort placements are ongoing, and we hope to also be able to share updates.

Panel: Literacy in the outdoors: Collaborative peer-to-peer learning (Heidi Smith, Caroline Gordon, Sarah Squire)

This project explored authentic assessment in its truest form through a collaborative, practice-based framework integrating outdoor learning, literacy, and sustainability education. Students actively led the design and teaching of interdisciplinary workshops, mirroring professional practice to peers. This provided an opportunity to apply learning acquired from university and site-based experiences. The approach emphasised experiential learning, where students learned with and from peers and through active engagement, tackling the complexities of outdoor and environmental education, and pedagogical design. Key to the authenticity of this project was its focus on assessing both tangible outputs - such as the workshops themselves - and more nuanced, 'messy' elements, including intercultural teamwork, reflective practice, and stakeholder engagement. Participants reflected on their experiences through interviews and questionnaires, capturing their development as educators and collaborators. Students gained leadership experience and developed pedagogical content knowledge in a real-world context. This aligns with the University's Curriculum Transformation Programme, equipping students with the skills to become self-directed learners and reflective practitioners. Through peer-to-peer teaching, participants enhanced their intercultural communication skills and engaged in meaningful dialogue with peers, fostering long-term professional relationships. By adopting a co-design approach, this project provided a model for integrating authentic assessment into interdisciplinary learning. Its focus on collaboration, reflection, and sustainability addressed key institutional priorities, ensuring the outcomes were transferable and impactful across the wider University context.

The panel will feature two staff members alongside students from two taught master's programmes: PGDE Primary and MSc programmes in Outdoor and Environmental Education. All panelists participated directly in the project and will offer a diverse range of insights. Each panelist will present their perspectives in concise, 3-minute contributions, after which the panel chair will facilitate an interactive Q&A session, inviting questions and fostering dialogue with the audience.

Presentation: Facilitating authentic assessment and feedback during workplace-based assessments: collaborative rubric creation (Yolanda Martinez-Pereira)

Workplace-based assessments (WBA) in health professions education, such as veterinary medicine, create opportunities to provide feedback to learners in an authentic context, assisting their journey to achieve competency. A range of WBA assessment tools can be used by clinical educators, however interpreting the language used in frameworks and recognising/mapping behaviours or performances corresponding to different milestones towards competency can be challenging. Rubrics, especially when co-created by stakeholders, can address these challenges.

This project aimed to co-create a rubric with clinical educators to assist with assessment and provision of feedback during the trial of a WBA tool designed to assess competency in final year veterinary students during their clinical rotations. Fourteen experienced clinical educators involved in trialling the tool in a small animal teaching hospital were invited to join an expert panel. A modified, three-round (two online and a third round face-to-face) Delphi study was conducted. For data analysis, consensus was pre-defined as 80% using the percent agreement (yes/no questions) and proportion within a range (Likert-type questions) methods. The third round underwent thematic analysis.

This methodology led to the collaborative creation of a rubric that reflects the interpretation of current competency-based veterinary education frameworks as it applies to an authentic context, using transparent and common language and therefore accessible to both clinical educators and learners. The third round provided an opportunity to share challenges providing feedback in face of professional misconduct and neurodivergent students, and the potential conflict between realities of the profession and limitations of teaching. In conclusion, this project successfully engaged stakeholders in the design phase of a WBA, creating an opportunity to surface and discuss the challenges of teaching and assessment in an authentic and complex workplace setting.

This presentation will briefly introduce WBA tools and rubrics ,and will describe the methodology used for the co-creation of a rubric using a modified Delphi project, which was then piloted during the implementation of a new WBA in a small animal teaching hospital.

Presentation: BadgEd: Digital badges for authentic assessment (Tracey Madden, Delia Georgescu)

A new University Service, BadgEd, has been developed to support the creation and issue of digital badges. This Service is available to any member of University staff or group of staff providing (non-credit bearing) learning opportunities to staff, matriculated students, or external learners.

These digital badges can be used to provide motivation and/or a reward but are also a verifiable method to authenticate that learners have been assessed as having been successful in terms of what was taught, such as by passing a course, reflecting on the change that learning has had on their practice, or demonstrating capability in an activity.

BadgEd encourages those issuing digital badges to explore the range of assessment methods available to them and select those methods that best fit the context including the learners involved. These methods may include more traditional tests of academic ability, such as written essays, but can include methods more authentic to the skills taught and more meaningful to those they would wish to share this information with, such as prospective employers.

We will demonstrate the opportunity that BadgEd offers to educators in the design of authentic and meaningful assessment. It will highlight the BadgEd framework which helps to ensure all digital badges issued offer value for both the recipient and the University. This will include examples of practice from multiple Schools, Institutes, and Departments on the digital badges they have created and the assessment scenarios they have selected to suit their needs. We will also include feedback on the impact of being involved in BadgEd has had, both on those issuing digital badges and those receiving them, including reactions to earning digital badges, the assessment methods offered to them, and impact on learning.

Panel: Principles of embedding sustainability in assessment: inclusivity and authenticity (Lucy Patterson, Victoria Tait, Patricia Castro Sanchez, Georgie Ducasi)

Advance HE recommends 9 principles for embedding sustainability into assessment and feedback (https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/630052/1/Nicholson%20and%20Vargas%202021.pdf).This panel session will introduce these principles and focus on good practice within the university of two of them, Inclusivity and Authenticity. The chair will provide initial framing of how authenticity and inclusivity are understood in the context of assessment and the panel will bring together two academic staff and one student who have experience with assessment that embodies these principles.

Sarah Frank is a lecturer on Healthy Eating for People and Planet, which is a challenge course hosted by the Global Academy of Agriculture and Food Systems. Students have a choice of communication medium for their assessment which is inclusive followed by the creation of a diet plan which enables authentic real-world impact. Patricia Castro Sanchez is a lecturer on the Pathogen Biology 3 course in the Institute of Immunology and Infection which received student partnership agreement funding in 2024/25 to develop an inclusive two-stage assessment method that is accessible regardless of student's social confidence. Elsewhere in the course's assessment, students apply current research data to create a grant proposal which demonstrates authenticity. A student studying on the Case Studies in Sustainable Development course in the School of Geoscience will join to share their experience of taking part in a living lab project with the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability as part of their assessment. This requires them to make researched recommendations for real problems at the university and grants flexibility for student groups to decide how to research their topic.

Panel: The evolution of assessment and feedback in online courses which tackle global challenges (Lauren Johnston Smith, Melissa Highton, Liz Grant)

2025 marks the 20th year of the University delivering online Masters degrees to a community of students based around the world. During this time our approaches to assessment and feedback have evolved in response to diverse, changing learner needs. In line with the technological and pedagogical opportunities of our digital age this group of students is particularly interesting because most of these part-time students are working professionals seeking to implement immediately what they've learned in their workplace. What works well with this distinct group of students may signal areas for development and innovation in curriculum transformation and approaches for all our digitally enhanced, blended and hybrid learning on campus for the future.

Assistant Principal for Online and Open Learning, Dr Melissa Highton, will chair this panel session which will allow us to share data insights from online courses, hear the different perspectives and experiences of programme directors from across the three Colleges, as well as from a graduate/current student. This session will also include discussion of the new AI tools which are available to use with students and learners on our teaching platforms. We will consider how marking rubrics, guidance for assignments and feedback strategies relate to cross-cultural environments, and how questions of merging case studies and theories are approached on courses which tackle complex global issues.

The panel will include experts from across the schools who have experience of designing and delivering feedback and assessment online, and a student/graduate who has benefited from those designs. The Panel Chair will posit questions to each panel member and invite thoughts and questions from the audience about the use of learning technology and AI in feedback and assessment.

Demonstration: Enhancing an open-source tool to improve efficiency and fairness in groupwork assessment (Nikhen Sanjaya Nyo, Cristina Alexandru, Aurora Constantin)

Group assignments offer students opportunities for more authentic, larger-scale tasks that mirror real-world scenarios, preparing them for employment. They enable 'learning by doing,' a pedagogical strategy known to foster communication, collaboration, organisation, and teamwork - skills valued by future employers in computer science.

However, poorly organised groupwork can lead to unfair treatment of students, and their missing out on the benefits of this approach. For example, research shows male students often dominate discussions in groups with one female member, and groupmates' abilities can affect individual results. Some instructors use heuristics in creating groups to address these issues, but creating fair, effective groups—especially in large courses—remains time-consuming with manual methods or tools like Excel.

This project addresses the gap by improving GruePR, an open-source tool that automates group formation using criteria such as grades, gender, and ethnicity. By streamlining group formation, the tool saves academics time and facilitates fair grouping, ultimately enabling the benefits of authentic, hands-on assessment.

The following were the steps of the project:

1. Reviewing literature on groupwork in higher education and grouping heuristics
2. Conducting studies with academics in the School of Informatics (SoI) to understand their needs regarding group formation and evaluate GruePR considering these needs and usability
3. Designing prioritised recommendations from the previous study as enhancements to GruePR, and evaluating them with HCI experts
4. Implementing all improvements and completing a final evaluation of the enhanced tool with academics in SoI
5. Recommending further improvements for the future development of the open-source tool

We will present the enhanced tool, our conclusions on its evaluation, and discuss its potential to improve efficiency and fairness in group formation processes.

Demonstration: A Tool to assist reviewing programme and course level assessment (Stephen Warrington, Vivian So)

The assessment across programmes is continually being developed and enhanced. The credit balance between examinations and coursework assessments, the number of coursework assessments, and their weighting are always evolving to enhance authentic assessment across the courses in a programme.

Currently, Schools and Deaneries across the University are reviewing their portfolio of taught programmes and the courses offered across those programmes. Each of the courses, compulsory and optional, across those programmes have their types of assessment. Some may be only an end-of-course examination, others solely coursework, with others a balance across examination and coursework.

While the dates of examinations are centrally scheduled across the examination diets to ensure there are no clashes of examinations irrespective of the programmes of the students on a course, coursework submission dates for coursework are organised at School level. As a result of this, ensuring that there is a balanced distribution with few clashes is difficult.

The tool being developed by Student Systems brings together the data, populated by Schools, from existing sources -Degree Programme Tables (DPTs) and assessment data in Assessment and Progression Tools (APT) - using Power BI enables staff in Schools involved in the management of their provision to explore the number and weightings of coursework within a course and to produce a graphic representation of the due dates, and weightings, for each of the compulsory and optional courses across their programmes.

Perhaps in the future, such a tool could be incorporated into Euclid to allow students and their Student Advisers to help plan optional courses, both in terms of content and the distribution of the assessment.

The live demonstration will show the format of the data produced, and examples of output from the system. This will also be an excellent opportunity for the development team to get feedback from across the University on other ways the tool could be used and any suggestions for enhancements.

Demonstration: The Virtual Ward - medical ward round simulator: an AI powered application for learning and feedback (Steven McCarthy)

The expanding use of Artificial intelligence as a tool to supplement learning has led to new and interesting opportunities for learning design and development. Generative AI models are being developed with the aim to assess and provide individual tailored feedback for large cohorts of students.

As part of the University's AI in Teaching Innovation project we are developing 'the Virtual Ward – Medical ward round simulator' app. We aim to harness the power of AI to generate realistic case scenarios that simulate the ward round experience and stimulate clinical decision-making.

The scenarios, guidelines and level of feedback can be customised and student led, allowing our application to be designed with considerable student input. These scenarios will provide individualised feedback on proposed management plans, referencing best practice guidelines and the interaction with the AI. This provision of appropriate evidence-based instant feedback replicates the in-person ward round experience and will directly relate to the level of complexity of the cases. This is particularly useful in the context of our programme's (The MSc in Internal Medicine) international cohort of practicing postgraduate doctors.

Our students represent a large diversity of countries, and career stages. We see this diversity as a benefit and will be consulting/surveying them for input into developing the app. A core competency for doctors is the ability to lead hospital ward rounds and synthesise complex medical information and patient characteristics, to form diagnoses and make coherent management plans, including prescribing medicines.

Our students as a global community, passionate about their profession, will be crucial partners in the development of the app. Once launched, the app will allow users to develop scenarios to allow a large global community of practice to be created and sustained.

Our presentation will cover the app's premise, student input, development and include a demo that walks through a clinical scenario.

Regarding shareability, the basic design of the app centres around the idea that there is a problem to be solved (clinical case), proposed solutions (management plan), and up-to-date guidance on which the plan is judged, and feedback is provided (NICE guidelines).

These principles are relevant to any clinical/non-clinical professions (e.g., Law, Architecture) - where there are problems to be solved and professional standards to be applied.

Presentation: Thinking outside the box – adapting assessment environments for disabled students (Jean O'Donoghue, Chris Mowat, Jenny Green, Greta Elliot, Fizzy Abou Jawad, Kirsten West)

In the 2024 Annual Disability Student Survey, almost half of disabled students who responded reported having received a lower mark on their course due to an assessment being inaccessible to them. In this presentation we will share some examples of where we have listened to students' challenges and worked with the Disability and Learning Support Service and teaching colleagues to develop modified assessments or assessment environments. Here in the University of Edinburgh, especially with our new model of student support, we now have a very powerful mechanism of better understanding the daily lived experience of our students via the relationship that is developing between our student advisers and disabled students. From our experience, we can see that the former "Named contact" adjustment has been largely supplanted by the student adviser–student relationship, and this means that many more disabled students can avail of the support and advocacy that would have been a feature of a much smaller number of students' journeys in the past.

One major positive impact of this relationship, have been the opportunity to work closely with disabled students to develop bespoke adjustments to assessment format and environment. In one example, a neurodivergent student's challenges inspired a range of changes to our viva at the end of the MChem degree for all students with extra time allowances. In another – taking a creative approach to the written exam environment allowed students with mental health conditions or neuro-motor conditions to achieve success.

We hope by sharing our experiences that we can ensure that while adjustments start with the Disability and Learning Support Service, they don't need to end there. And indeed, we would echo the thoughts of the respondents to the Access Insights Report when asked how HE institutions can do better:
"Be proactive not reactive […] Ask questions, listen to the answers and act on these." (1)

Reference:
1. The 2024 Access Insights Report by Disabled Students UK https://disabledstudents.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2024-Access-Insights-Report.pdf

Presentation: Supporting the next generation of Biological Science professionals: How a reflective portfolio influences student academic success and career aspirations (Christina Butt, Alison Cullinane)

Reflective portfolio courses represent a critical pedagogical tool for undergraduate students to evaluate the achievement of learning outcomes, adopt a constructivist approach to knowledge acquisition, and consolidate skill development (Roecker et al., 2007; Reis & Villaume, 2002). Portfolios play a critical role in fostering independent learning and reflective practice, key attributes for the future progression of undergraduates (Slater, 1997).

The research below investigates the impact of reflective portfolio assessment on the development of graduate attributes and their influence on students' academic trajectories within Biological Sciences. This research is being conducted as part of a Biochemistry Honours programme. Specifically, the study evaluates the efficacy of an assessed credit bearing reflective portfolio course designed to enhance students' understanding of professionalism and foster personal and professional growth during their undergraduate studies. Building on the premise that the development of interest in science is influenced by the quality and type of instruction (Eccles & Midgley, 1989), this research seeks to determine whether the course content supports student engagement and learning outcomes.

Despite the theoretical benefits of reflective portfolio courses, there is a paucity of research on their development and implementation within science education. This study's secondary focus examines the extent to which Widening Participation [1] Science students are differentially impacted by these assessments, addressing broader questions about the role of reflective portfolio courses in promoting equitable and effective educational practices.

Data will be presented from all year groups using an approach encompassing attainment, intrinsic, and utility value constructs (Gardner, 1996). Fourth-year students who have not participated in the reflective portfolio course serve as the control group. The presentation will provide an overview of the portfolio design as well as the perceived long-term benefits for academic and professional development. Recommendations will be provided for how such courses can enhance student learning experiences, assessments and professional opportunities.

[1] Widening Participation is a term used for students based on their home postcode and level of deprivation, level of education attainment at secondary and sixth form, if care experienced, a refugee or asylum seeker.

Presentation: Toward embedding accessibility in Higher Education through Curriculum Transformation: Perspectives from a PTAS Grant (Aurora Constantin, Tracey Madden, Joanna Alexjuk ,Cristina Alexandru, Jon Turner, Xingran Ruan)

With one in five people globally living with disabilities and the demand for assistive tools projected to reach 3.5 billion by 2050, embedding accessibility in higher education is essential. Accessibility education promotes equity, employability, and innovation while meeting legal and social responsibilities. Despite growing demand from companies like Microsoft and Google for professionals skilled in accessibility, many educational institutions face challenges, including a lack of recognition of accessibility as a core subject and insufficient teaching expertise.

Teaching and assessing students on accessibility is particularly relevant in the Schools of Informatics, Education, and Health in Social Science, as it equips them to design inclusive technologies, educational resources, and healthcare solutions. The “Embedding Accessibility into HE Courses and Programmes” PTAS project addresses this need by exploring how we can systematically integrate accessibility into courses and programmes within these Schools. Aligned with the university’s Curriculum Transformation Project, the initiative promotes Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, ensuring graduates can develop inclusive solutions and drive meaningful societal change.

The project involved desk research to identify gaps in accessibility education, semi-structured interviews to gather stakeholder perspectives and focus groups to explore key themes, foster collaboration, and empower stakeholders to promote accessibility in higher education.

As part of the project, we examined the role of assessment and feedback in embedding accessibility. Students, lecturers and other stakeholders participated in all studies to share their views and suggest strategies for integrating accessibility into teaching, assessment, and feedback. Feedback processes and innovative evaluation strategies - such as project-based assignments, peer feedback, and authentic evaluations - were identified to encourage deeper learning and practical application of accessibility principles.

We will present our findings to date and a set of informed recommendations for systematically embedding accessibility into curricula, moving beyond advocate-driven efforts, and developing transformative, programme-level assessments.

Presentation: The role of generative AI in research project self-assessment (Michael Petersen)

The Senior Honours Project in the School of Physics and Astronomy is a fourth-year one-semester research project that is often a student's first introduction to independent research. The course is critical to building a foundation in research skills. Students are paired with an advisor, who has proposed a project based on their own research interests. The Senior Honours course is assessed by independent staff members marking a final report describing the research. As the projects are undertaken one-on-one with an advisor, and the advisors are not allowed to see the report prior to submission, students are often left wishing for more feedback on their work.

My experience as a Senior Honours Project advisor made me aware that students are using generative AI (GenAI) as a form of self-assessment: GenAI acts as a conversation partner with which students check ideas and understanding, improving confidence in their own work. Often the use of GenAI includes questions deemed too inconsequential for the advisor but can extend far beyond to long discussions and brainstorming. However, at present, most of the use of GenAI is undertaken as an individual student effort with little-to-no training, at best limiting the utility and at worst creating shallow understanding reliant on GenAI. As GenAI continues to pervade work at large, training students to use GenAI as a friendly assessment partner -- not unlike a peer, rather than a 'boss' -- will improve student confidence and outcomes.

Inspired by my own experience, and with a goal to develop best practices for student self-assessment using GenAI, I designed and administered a survey of GenAI practices undertaken by students across the Senior Honours Project course. I will present the results of the survey -- unsurprisingly, large numbers of students are working with GenAI in the Senior Honours Project -- and discuss planned recommendations for GenAI use in research projects such that students can get the most out of GenAI as a transformative assessment tool.

Presentation: Enhancing peer feedback quality in MarkEd (Tomas Maillo, Christina Alexandru, Aurora Constantin)

Despite the widely recognized benefits of peer feedback in education—including self-reflection, active learning, and the development of communication skills—course organizers often hesitate to implement it due to concerns about quality and consistency. Varying levels of student expertise, cultural differences in feedback approaches, and inconsistent interpretation of assessment criteria are well-explored issues with peer feedback that can make it unreliable and potentially counterproductive.

To help make the most out of peer feedback benefits at the School of Informatics, we have extended an existing assessment platform names MarkEd by integrating Large Language Models (LLMs), to improve peer feedback quality while supporting students in developing better feedback practices. The system enables course organizers to create peer assessments where students submit work in PDF format. Students are then randomly paired while maintaining anonymity and a balanced distribution. When giving peer feedback, students can select specific sections of text from their peer's submission and add annotations. The system then analyzes each piece of feedback by providing the LLM with the selected text (including surrounding context), the student's feedback, and research-based criteria for effective feedback. The LLM evaluates feedback quality and suggests improvements based on established principles. The peer reviewer can then improve their feedback. A marker can also provide feedback, on both the work and the peer's feedback.

Our development followed these key stages:

1. Review of related systems and literature on high quality peer feedback.
2. Design and implementation informed by background research and MarkEd's existing architecture.
3. Evaluation of system usability and impact with students and markers using the system within the Software Engineering and Professional Practice course's formative assessment at the School of Informatics

In this talk, we will present Marked's complete peer assessment cycle. We will also summarise our evaluation results and plans.

Presentation: Perspectives from a PTAS project on understanding and shaping generative AI Integration in Computer Science education (Cristina Alexandru, Pavlos Andreadis, Judy Robertson, Stuart King, Aurora Constantin, Vidminas Vizgirda)

The integration of Generative AI (GenAI) into Computer Science (CS) education presents both opportunities (e.g., real-time feedback) and challenges (e.g., attribution of AI-generated solutions) for educators and students. Our PTAS project investigates staff and student perspectives within CS courses at the University of Edinburgh's Schools of Informatics, Mathematics, and Business. Through questionnaires, focus groups, and a literature review, we have gathered insights on current practices, challenges, and strategies for GenAI integration.

Our research highlights faculty anxieties and experiences related to GenAI, including its influence on transformative assessment methodologies and feedback practices. We explored how GenAI is used to inform assessment design, and to provide feedback and support to students. Simultaneously, we examined student attitudes towards GenAI, including usage patterns, preferences, and concerns about its impact on their learning experiences. We gathered student views on faculty approaches to using GenAI in their assessment and feedback.

We are developing a report with recommendations for responsible integration of GenAI into teaching and assessment within the three Schools and a toolkit to assist staff in navigating AI-enhanced learning. This toolkit emphasises best practices, encourages innovative uses of GenAI, discusses equitable access to GenAI tools, and addresses potential disparities in their use. Our aim is to equip educators and learners with the knowledge and resources to adapt to AI's transformative potential in CS education, fostering a more innovative, equitable, and inclusive learning environment.

In this talk, we will present our results to date, emphasising the innovation and technological opportunities presented by GenAI, and share our progress with the report and toolkit.

Presentation: Assessing your assessment: using AI to test the robustness of your assessments against generative AI (Jobran Chebib)

Like it or not, generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), like ChatGPT, is here and available to all students. A recent study found that 53% of undergraduate students polled admitted to using generative AI to help complete their assessments. If assessments are to remain authentic and provide evidence that students are meeting learning outcomes, they must be tested for their robustness against generative AI. Over the last two years, we have developed a take-home, problem-based data handling assessment for an undergraduate biology course and tested it for robustness against several older and newer versions of generative AI (e.g. Google's AI, ChatGPT, Microsoft Co-pilot). The goal was to determine the weaknesses and strengths of different types of assessment questions and produce an assessment that is less likely to be exploitable by AI. We found that questions that required explanation or interpretation of images were less likely to receive correct responses from older versions of gen AI but that newer versions were able to overcome these deficits. We will present the methods that we used to test the robustness of our assessment against AI and what we did in response to increase this robustness. We believe that, given the increasing prevalence of AI usage among students, it is necessary for assessment developers to perform AI robustness testing if they want to ensure that their assessments remain authentic.

Presentation: Introducing TILT: Assessment strategies in the Toolkit for Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching (David Overend)

There are many examples of interdisciplinary learning experiences that might offer exciting, challenging and innovative content, but assess learning exclusively through exams and essays. These traditional modes of assessment have their place and can certainly be used effectively in the interdisciplinary classroom. However, they are not the only ones available and more 'authentic' modes of assessment may be required. In this paper, group assessment, 'ungrading', and reflection are discussed as examples of authentic assessment, along with a range of assessment formats. As a key output from the Crossing the Line research project, the Toolkit for Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching (TILT) gathers together a collection of assessment strategies for interdisciplinary learners and educators. From 2022-2024, a team of interdisciplinary education researchers at the University of Edinburgh observed, documented and critically reflected on the inaugural delivery of a new undergraduate programme at Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI). The MA (Hons) Interdisciplinary Futures launched in September 2023, preceded by a suite of pre-honours elective courses. Assessment was a key focus of this work and findings from the research informed the development of TILT. Students were closely engaged in the process of conceptualising, reflecting and practising interdisciplinarity as the site was developed, with a series of development workshops and student input at every stage of the process. Student perspectives are included in this paper, which includes a short video on assessment in the interdisciplinary classroom, and shares insights from first- and second-year students on the Interdisciplinary Futures programme. TILT is now available at blogs.ed.ac.uk/tilt/.

Presentation: Learning in health and wellbeing through assessed reflection and group work (Deb Holt, Colin Brough)

Our presentation shares authentic assessments from a level 8, 20 credit elective on wellbeing, open to any student in the university. We will explain the rationale behind our approach, but more importantly students from the course will share their perspective on how the process of carrying out the course assessments furthered their learning.

In the course, we talk a lot about the difference between knowing & doing/being; the assessments allow students the chance to be and become/to act and embody their learning, making it more meaningful. Student feedback includes that they understand the theory more when they identify a life experience where this theory has been embodied/enacted. One of the learning outcomes reflects this: 'Work collaboratively with others & develop the capacity to promote the health & wellbeing of self & others around you'

Reflection is an integral part of course learning. Students are asked to reflect on their learning about wellbeing concepts in relation to their wellbeing and studies each week, as a way to help them achieve the learning outcomes. They then choose 3 reflections to submit for summative assessment 1. Students tell us that the process of reflecting helps them to learn by doing.

Assessment 2 assesses the students' ability to work as part of a group in healthy ways. Whilst there is a product to submit which evidences their understanding in a specific area of wellbeing, the process of creating that product as a group also furthers their learning. Instead of learning about how to work collaboratively in healthy ways, students are given the opportunity to do so. There are scaffolding tasks earlier in the course where students discuss, for example, what they need to feel safe, included and productive as part of a group. They then work collaboratively on the creation of a visual representation, reflecting and identifying the impact of the group process on their wellbeing, steps taken to increase healthy/prosocial behaviours and/or resolve differences of opinion or how challenges were overcome in healthy ways.

We want students to be healthier and to know how they contribute to their own and others' health. We believe learning by doing with authentic assessment is a better way to do this. Whilst our assessment approach is embedded in our LOs, we believe our experience is transferable to other courses. In summary, our presentation will outline what we do, how, why, and will bring the students' perspectives.

Presentation: Mapping competencies and nurturing professional practice through digital portfolios (Jamie Auld Smith, Juan Jose Miranda)

In this presentation, we will share our experience supporting Community Learning and Development (CLD) students on the MA Learning in Communities (MALiC) programme in Moray House School of Education and Sport using PebblePad portfolios to connect theoretical frameworks with diverse professional practice.

The MALiC programme includes an intensive 17-week placement in local organisations addressing critical issues such as poverty, community empowerment, and mental health. As part of their assessment, students compile a digital portfolio in PebblePad to reflect on their experiences and evidence their work against the competency framework set by the CLD Standards Council for Scotland.

Initially, portfolio uptake was limited, despite training sessions and enthusiasm from students and faculty. To address this, the Learning Technology team worked with the Course Organiser to introduce PebblePad's capability mapping feature, enabling students to link portfolio evidence to specific competencies and justify their choices. This innovation re-energised the portfolio as a meaningful reflective tool, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Examples from the 2023–2024 cohort highlight the tool's transformative potential. One student linked a family poverty project to competencies in community advocacy, while another used reflections on sanitary product provision to demonstrate dignity-building practices. Despite early challenges with engagement, we observed deep, critical reflection from students who embraced the capability mapping feature, enhancing their professional growth. We have just rolled this out for the 2025 placements and look forward to further feedback by the time of the Learning and Teaching Conference.

This session will explore lessons learned, including fostering sustained engagement and navigating technological barriers. We aim to inspire educators to integrate authentic, reflective assessment practices that empower students as professionals and practitioners, while exploring potential links with Curriculum Transformation and skills articulation.

We look forward to contributing to the conversation on transformative assessment and feedback.

Presentation: Negotiated community assessment: A decolonising approach to compassionate assessment practices (Mary Collacott, Beth Christie)

Through our Sustainability and Social Responsibility course – one of the pilot CTP Challenge courses – we are proposing a novel approach to assessment which aims to challenge accepted norms regarding individualised production-as-assessment practices. The course itself examines the compounding impacts which oppressive worldviews - such as racism, sexism, capitalism and colonialism - have on our relationship to the more-than-human world. We explore possibilities for thinking otherwise as a necessary step in moving towards a sustainable future for humanity. In this context, an individualistic approach to assessment goes against the principles and values upon which the course is built. In this presentation, we offer an alternative collective assessment approach and outline our proposal for how this would be implemented in practice.
Negotiated Community Assessment: Through ongoing personal reflection and participation in a group project, all students act as valued members of a community of knowers, contributing to a collective ecology of knowledges held as a cohort. Learners can contribute in varied ways, with different forms of knowledge and modes of communication. There is no hierarchy in the value of forms of knowledge. However, there is a value placed on the diversity of knowledges held by the group and their ability to share that knowledge with one another - resulting in a vibrant, rich and resilient knowledge ecosystem.

Knowledge Exchange Pitch: In small groups students will work together to present a pitch outlining a contribution that they could bring to a celebratory Knowledge Exchange Event. They must outline the form that their contribution would take, offer an excerpt or example of the final piece, and share their key influences or the underlying ideology that has informed their thinking. We encourage them to be bold and creative in their response.

Grade Negotiation: At the end of the course, students will come together with course tutors to democratically agree a shared grade received by every student on the course based on their reflections on their collective knowledge development, recognising all individuals as valued contributors to their shared understanding.
As a means of interrogating standard assessment practices, we examine how such an approach to assessment acts differently, and in which ways this might disrupt existing inequalities and knowledge biases which are reinforced through current approaches.

Break Out Session 3

Presentation: The use of podcasts for formative feedback and co-creation (Andre Phillips)

Podcasts have had a range of uses in Higher Education (Kay 2012) and while co-creation is common (Serini et al 2024), to my knowledge, their use as method of providing feedback alongside teaching has not been explored much.

Programme: The Online, Part Time, Remote Masters in Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health (within the Biomedical Teaching Organisation) (BWEH)

Course: Use of Artificial Reproductive Technologies in Conservation (ARTs)

The students taking on our programme are learning remotely, so live interactions are all the more valuable for them, when they can be scheduled.

In this course, students are asked to write a 2000-word case study on how artificial reproductive technology has helped, or has potential to help, a species at risk. This is quite a technical question, challenging them to discuss detailed complex techniques yet also highlight their wider relevancy to conservation.

There was no opportunity for formative feedback when I started helping with the course, but it is something students were asking for through feedback. Rather than students sending in plans or drafts, I offered to meet them (online) for an informal chat on their case study. I posed the same questions developed in the assignment brief, but the informal discussion allowed for students to explore their topic and help articulate their own points to themselves, with minimal prompting from myself.

These chats were recorded, and released as co-created podcasts after the assignment, so other students could learn about what other species and techniques students had explored, increasing their breadth of knowledge.

The opportunity to present at L&T will allow me to highlight the effectiveness of developing formative feedback in this informal, discursive, and co-creative manner, and share an example of good practice for other courses, not just online remote ones.

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Presentation: Designing formative activities for developing skills required for specific summative assessments (Victoria Lindsay-McGee)

Using the example of the Equine Exercise Physiology 20 credit online postgraduate taught course and the recent development of two formative assessments using asynchronous Wooclap quizzes and alumni interviews, we pose questions about aims of formative assessments, student understanding of and engagement in formative activities, and how we can offer useful feedback for students that does not overload teaching staff.

We recently designed two new formative activities for the Equine Exercise Physiology course, targeting skills required for the two summative assessments: a lecture integrated with a Wooclap asynchronous participant pace quiz, and with activities involving extracts of text, published papers and applying rubrics; and a series of alumni interviews, students were encouraged to answer specific questions on and discuss in a seminar. Feedback from students was mixed and indicated that some student perception of the benefit of these activities was that they did not provide good assessment preparation by way of giving a preview of marking styles.

The development of these assessments is very much a work in progress, with further suggestions, thoughts and discussion appreciated.

Panel: Radically re-thinking assessment (Emily Taylor, Mary Brennan)

Innovations in teaching and assessment traditionally have been incremental. New practices often emerge through small-scale pilots and gradual proliferation leading eventually to mainstream adoption. Whilst this model has many advantages, including perceived safety, it lacks agility in responding to large and sudden changes to the HE context. What if we didn't or couldn't approach change incrementally but instead 'tore up the playbook' on assessment?

COVID-19, accessible Generative AI, global and environmental instability, and the multiple resource constraints facing today's students and HE institutions demand a radical rethink of how we effectively assess our students. How could we use assessment to better support student engagement, maximise learning, enhance student experience, and prepare students for their future lives and careers (Scobey, 2023; Advance HE, 2024)?

This session will use a workshop format to invite the audience ("the panel") to engage with radical provocations regarding assessment approaches in HE. These provocations will be designed to challenge our preconceptions, test out ideas, imagine a different future and maybe even find some practical solutions to thorny problems.

Participating staff and students will be invited to interrogate questions and scenarios such as:
- What and who is assessment and grading for?
- What does literacy and scholarship mean in a world of Generative AI?
- Is it the end for the essay?
- What if we didn't have assessment deadlines?

References:
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Demonstration: Assessment transparency – A demonstration of approaches to share assessment expectations with students (Gary Standiger, Brodie Runciman)

When implemented effectively, rubrics can significantly impact students' learning, attainment, self-regulation and motivation (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013; Brookhart & Chen, 2015). Rubrics can make assessment criteria explicit; helping to align learning, instruction, and assessment. A well-designed, student-friendly rubric can increase transparency in communicating assessment requirements. That said, there are challenges to creating a well-defined rubric. For instance, students using rubrics for reflective writing assignments often struggle to articulate descriptive criteria such as 'good,' 'very good,' and 'excellent.' Without formative feedback and exemplar learning material that helps students to appreciate different criteria, students can struggle to accurately self and peer assess, hindering the quality of feedback they generate for themselves and others.
Recognising the challenges outlined above, two Teaching Fellows at MHSES created an assessment rubric for their Undergraduate course last academic year. After writing about their experiences of creating a rubric, they have been working on evidence-based strategies to share assessment expectations with students in seminars as a means of reducing assessment anxiety and to aid self-reflection (Wolters, 2003; Andrade and Du, 2005). Feedback from students following these seminars highlighted improvements in their ability to plan, monitor and self-assess their work in progress, helping them to become savvy feedback seekers. By showcasing our knowledge and experiences, we aim to provide university-wide colleagues with practical tools, strategies and ideas to increase transparency over assessment expectations to enhance learning and teaching in a 25-minute active learning session. We'll aim to pitch it to colleagues, using a rubric for the first time, and develop the session from there.

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Demonstration: Unifying marking scheme within feedback and simplifying rubric grades for best practice (Daniel Orejon)

Feedback and assessment is an intrinsic part of our everyday academic role and getting it right is of great importance as well as highlight valued by our students. This is even more important in the case of engineering or science courses containing coursework in the form of a report without exact numerical answers that can actually ease the marking and create consistency. In the case of written reports in many occasions, the marks and feedback are left to the subjectivity and dedicated work of the marker.

Nonetheless, aiming to minimize markers subjectivity as well as working load and to allow them to provide more consistent feedback to the students throughout, we introduce in this talk the different evolution that both the assessments and feedback in Chemical Engineering Laboratory 3 have undergone since AY19/20. Here our efforts on Unifying Marking Scheme within Feedback and Simplifying Rubric Grades for Best Practice are introduced and presented. Moreover, we provide more specific guidelines to students on how to complete a high-quality laboratory report, the new feedback form minimizes marker subjectivity while at the same time provides more uniform feedback content to the students. The adopted marking scheme reduces the markers subjectivity by minimising the number of levels or details of the rubric form, i.e., simplifying rubric form, from 10 or 100 to just 3 as Excellent, Acceptable and Improve.

In addition, by this newly introduced marking and feedback approach, we are able to increase the grades variance within the course giving account of a more realistic outcome of the expected students marks, with their consequent increased satisfaction.

This Demonstration will include a couple of examples for the attendees to grade and provide feedback following earlier and current marking schemes, which scores and amount of feedback will be then quantified and compared using Wooclap to prove the benefits of the methodology adopted.

Demonstration: Student engagement and partnership in assessment and feedback (Catherine Bovill, Megan Brown)

This session will introduce attendees to two key sector reference points, developed by Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs), Scotland's national agency for student engagement, in collaboration with students and staff across Scotland. These are the Student Learning Experience (SLE) model and Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership. The session will explore how these models can support students and staff to enhance the quality of assessment and feedback together.

The SLE model was developed by students in partnership with staff across Scotland's tertiary sector. It is designed to sit at the heart of conversations with students, enabling students and staff to work together to identify priorities to enhance the quality of learning. The SLE model is comprised of 9 building blocks – the key elements that make up the learning experience - one of which is Assessment and Feedback. Each building block has an accompanying set of 10 reflective questions which students and staff can use to discuss and evaluate their practice and to make positive changes to the student experience.

Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership is a tool which supports institutions and students' associations to evaluate their student engagement and partnership practices against 8 features of partnership. The tool can be used at an institutional level or within departments and subject levels. The Ambition Statement can also be used to evaluate particular building blocks of the Student Learning Experience and consider the extent to which students are partners in each area of their learning and teaching.

In this session, Catherine Bovill (Institute for Academic Development) will introduce Megan Brown (sparqs) who will present the two models and begin to explore how the Student Learning Experience model and the Partnership Ambition can be used to shape co-creative approaches to developing and enhancing assessment & feedback and the wider student experience at the University of Edinburgh.

Presentation: Staff-student co-creation of authentic assessment for PGT Courses: The case of the "Curriculum: Context, Change and Development" group assessment (Jingyi Li, Lianya Qiu, Jiyuan Song)

The presentation aims to share the development of a group assessment for the "Curriculum: Context, Change and Development" course, a Postgraduate Taught (PGT) course at the Moray House School of Education and Sport. Despite a strong student desire for practicing knowledge learned in classroom in real-life settings, it has proven challenging to embed placements or internship in 1-year PGT programmes for students in Social Science, given the time constraints and the substantial resources required for establishing and managing placements.

Recognising the value of integrating classroom learning with practical application and the benefits of authentic assessment, a key assessment component for this course involves students delivering a detailed project proposal for a cross-curricular learning program to potential funders. This assessment encourages students to engage in both the design of learning programmes and the proposal writing process. The assessment features a unique set of marking criteria that emphasises applicability and sustainability. It was developed through a collaborative staff-student co-creation process and has informed several funded projects.

This assessment engages students in both the design of learning programmes and the proposal writing process. The assessment also has a unique set of marking criteria that emphasises applicability and sustainability. It was developed through a collaborative staff-student co-creation process and has subsequently informed several funded projects.

Our presentation seeks to showcase this innovative assessment, where students practice the role of educational program designers, thereby integrating theoretical knowledge and contextual knowledge with practical application. Our presentation includes 1) a detailed perspective on the development process of this authentic assessment, and 2) feedback from students on the learning impact of this assessment type, and reflections from staff on the impact of innovative assessments on staff experiences and workload. We will explore how the design and implementation of authentic assessments have translated into higher student motivation and achievement (e.g., subsequent student-led initiatives), and discuss the potential adaptability to different subjects and the critical role of authentic assessment in Higher Education.

Presentation: Co-creating an assessment that promotes collaborative learning (Patricia Castro Sánchez, Achim Schnaufer, Zoe Dearness, Linzhi Huang, Abigail Strath, Emma Curry, Priscila Xin Yi)

Two-stage assessments represent a good opportunity to turn exams into learning experiences, foster collaboration between students and reduce assessment stress. In a typical two-stage assessment, students complete an exam individually (stage 1) and then complete the same exam in small groups (stage 2). The final mark is a combination of the marks from the individual and the group components. The possibility of getting instant peer feedback and increasing the mark during the group stage provides a strong motivation for students to discuss answers. Therefore, two-stage assessments represent an opportunity to encourage collaborative learning in large class settings. In addition, previous studies have reported that students perceive two-stage exams as more useful for learning and less stressful than traditional examinations.

In the first semester of the academic year 2024/25, a new Biology third-year course, Pathogen Biology 3 (PB3), implemented this type of assessment. We are now conducting a project, funded by the Student-Partnership Agreement, to gather feedback about this experience and to co-create a future implementation of the assessment. In this talk, we will present our results and discuss the experience of co-creating an assessment. In brief, we created an anonymous online questionnaire and shared it with former PB3 students to collect feedback on the two-stage exam experience. We obtained 22 responses (44% response rate), that overall showed some positive aspects of this assessment, such as the perception that participating in the group stage helps consolidate the understanding of the concepts in the course (77.3% of respondents). The feedback also pointed at areas for improvement, for example in terms of the levels of stress induced by the assessment, as 45.5% of respondents found the two-stage exam more stressful than a traditional exam. Furthermore, the questionnaire revealed students' preferences in aspects such as the number of students per group in the second phase, the proportion of time allocated to each phase and the system used to assign groups. Specific aspects of this feedback were selected for further discussion in a focus group with students, which has led to a co-created version of the assessment that will be implemented next year.

Panel: Embedding Generative AI: Enhancing Course Feedback Dynamics (Lin Watson, Javier Tejera, Hermione Hague, Pavlos Andreadis, Mteeve Amugune, Jane Alexander)

Our panel, "Consult-Ed: Transforming Authentic Assessment through AI Across Disciplines," explores innovative assessment strategies using AI tools across diverse programmes, including Law, Japanese, Ancient History, Creative Writing, and Family Medicine.

These subject areas have had proposals selected by EFI-based 'AI for Teaching Innovation' with Prof Sian Bayne in digital education. These projects are ongoing this year.

"Consult-Ed" is an AI app designed to create realistic and culturally diverse simulations that enhance authentic assessment and feedback literacy. This initiative encourages responsible AI use and incorporates student co-creation, empowering their voice in the learning process.

Ethical considerations focus on ensuring transparency, reducing biases, and promoting compassionate assessment. Reflection discussions are integral to evaluating the app's impact, aligning with inclusive and transformative assessment frameworks.

Our interdisciplinary panel, featuring experts from the mentioned disciplines and digital education (we have named lead individuals from each area), will present unique perspectives on novel technological opportunities in higher education. The session includes a chaired audience discussion to deepen engagement with participants.

This panel promises dynamic dialogue on integrating AI within diverse academic fields, supporting interdisciplinary collaboration and ethical educational advancements.

Delivery Plan:

- Each panel member speaks for 5 minutes
- Audience discussion on AI use in feedback (instant non-human mediated and also asynchronous human input feedback).

Learning Objectives:

1. Explore AI's role in authentic feedback and assessment across disciplines
2. Discuss ethical and inclusive feedback and assessment strategies
3. Foster interdisciplinary collaboration in feedback and assessment design
4. Include the student voice in AI innovation in teaching.

Presentation: Bridging wellbeing and academic success: Innovations in assessment and feedback design (Justine Maclean, Sarah MacIsaac, Fraser Clark, Ben Gordon)

The theme of wellbeing has garnered significant attention in educational policy in recent years, accompanied by increased investment in mental health awareness and high-quality care (WHO, 2023). In response to evolving student needs, universities worldwide have introduced support services aimed at addressing mental health provision (Rashid et al., 2017). However, the focus on interventions designed to help student teachers cope has inadvertently diminished emphasis on the positive wellbeing outcomes of supporting students in achieving academic potential (Chaase, et al., 2021). Academics and their taught programmes represent the only consistent points of contact between students and the university, highlighting the growing importance of integrating wellbeing within curriculum design, delivery, assessment, and feedback.

Drawing on Archer's (2003) work on analytic dualism and Aristotle's theories of thriving (Irwin (1995), the lecturers co-created assessment and feedback practices in collaboration with alumni, current students, and industry professionals. These practices were embedded within the course design, enabling students to exercise agency by working in small teams on projects reflecting their future professional practice. The assessment approach encouraged students to develop academic presentations within small communities of practice, fostering collective agency, leveraging strengths, embracing mistakes as learning opportunities, cultivating independence, and building trust. The culmination of this approach was a student-led conference, open to the academic community, which served as a platform for students to model effective practice to peers in the year below. This conference created opportunities for peer feedback and enabled students to refine their work before final summative assessments.

The student team of presenters will share experiences of their co-created summative and formative assessment and feedback approach, using this as a stimulus for reflection and discussion. The lecturers will be able to answer questions about the work during the later discussion time. We hope others find this work both interesting and relevant, fostering a deeper understanding of how to support students holistically, enabling them to thrive and achieve academic success.

Presentation: A wire-framed creative assessment for agency, belonging and joyful learning (Heather McQueen, Elise Darmon, Alison Cullinane)

The creative task is a group assignment completed by all biology students within the critical first six weeks of university. Beside linking creativity with science, the task is designed to build student agency, assessment literacy and individual sense of inclusion, belonging and community.
Student groups have free choice of both the biology topic and the media-type used to present their creative task. The agency this creates has led to an impressive array of innovative presentations on many aspects of biology, from plays to pinatas, and mockumentaries to Minecraft. Time and support for group work throughout the course ensures that students work well together in their group, both within and outside of class, to form good working and social relationships.

The creative event in week six is a fun, social and educational event. Staff and students co-create the assessment rubric in advance, and both provide marks using an online form on the day.

Marking criteria need to be flexible enough to accommodate the variety of work that students produce, yet clear enough that students understand what will be rewarded and so that marking can be equitable for very different submission types. These flexible yet clear criteria reward the quality of the work without placing any restrictions on what the work is and can be described as 'wire-framed', allowing complete freedom for how students achieve the criteria.

In our presentation we will outline the procedures and structure of this assessment sharing guidance, rubrics and outputs including student views and will reflect on the benefits and issues that we have encountered over three course iterations. Attendees will learn about the student agency, improved assessment literacy and fun we have had with students in this assessment.

Posters

Poster 1. Novel clinical reasoning (Chris McKenzie) Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

This poster highlights an innovative project reimagining clinical reasoning assessments using the ExamSys platform. By integrating advanced functionality such as "autocomplete", developed as part of this PTAS project, and engaging students as co-creators, the initiative transforms assessment into a dynamic, inclusive, and scalable process that fosters authentic learning and decision-making.

ExamSys Platform and the Role of Autocomplete

ExamSys is an open-source assessment platform designed to create flexible and innovative assessment formats, well-suited to the complexity and variability of clinical reasoning. Central to this project is the "autocomplete" functionality, which enhances scenario-based questions by allowing students to type responses, such as diagnostic tests, treatments, or drug names, and receive suggestions from a database of valid options, including:

- Drugs: Specific names (e.g., amoxicillin), classes (e.g., penicillins), or families.
- Diagnostic Tests: Imaging modalities, blood tests, or other investigations.
- Conditions and Symptoms: Differential diagnoses or clinical signs.

Key Benefits of Autocomplete

- Authenticity: Students independently generate answers instead of selecting from pre-supplied options, reflecting real-world clinical practice.
- Inclusivity: By standardising inputs and accommodating diverse spellings or terminologies, the system ensures equity for neurodiverse students and non-native English speakers.
- Efficiency: Constrained answer options streamline marking while preserving flexibility and fairness.

Student Co-Creation Workshop

A co-design workshop engaged undergraduate students to collaboratively create and refine clinical reasoning scenarios. Participants drafted question stems, solutions, and branching paths, tested the autocomplete functionality, and provided feedback. Peer review and iterative refinement ensured relevance and usability.

Outcomes and Future Directions

Workshop feedback highlighted autocomplete as both a teaching and assessment tool. Students valued its potential to enhance engagement, inclusivity, and real-world alignment. Future work will focus on refining the database and expanding question archetypes for broader curricular integration.

This transformative approach demonstrates how technology and co-creation empower students, creating assessments that are inclusive, authentic, and effective in fostering deeper learning.

Poster 2. Student voices amplified: Podcasting as an innovative assessment strategy for embedding ethics, responsibility and sustainability (Kristina Auxtova) Presented on Miro Board, Conference Teams site. Poster also displayed in Alder room, but Kristina not able to attend so please direct any questions to: kristina.auxtova@ed.ac.uk.

This research explores student podcasting, argued to encourage deep learning (Dale and Povey 2009), as an innovative method of assessment and a useful tool for embedding ethics, responsibility and sustainability (ERS) – a key item on current higher education agendas. It asks: How to best use student podcasting to embed learning of ERS issues? While little research investigates student-produced podcasts used for learning and assessment (but see Abt and Barry 2007; Kemp et al. 2012; Lee et al. 2008), student podcasting appears to be very successful at encouraging active learning and knowledge creation (Lee et al. 2008), enhancing student engagement, creativity, technological skills and ability to communicate science to a wider audience (Kemp et al. 2012).

Embracing action research principles, this project adopts a double-loop evaluation of an assessment on an undergraduate honours course, where students produced a podcast episode about a self-selected ERS issue in marketing communications (e.g. targeting vulnerable consumers, gambling advertising, gender/race stereotyping, greenwashing). With a multi-method research design, this project comprises of 1) a reflection on my own practice and experience of the podcast assignment (Somekh 2006); 2) a thematic analysis of student written reflections on the assignment's first iteration (~300 words per student); and 3) a focus group exploring the student experience of this assignment.

The findings reveal the assessment led to three transformations for the students: 1) reframing the way they learn and share what they learn through the format of the podcast, 2) reframing their own ethical and sustainable mindset, and 3) being inspired to take action and effect social change beyond the classroom. The podcast was seen as an innovative assessment that allowed students to take ownership of their learning (Hermes and Rimanoczy 2018), question their own assumptions and behaviours, develop employability skills, while also resulting in a product of their work that is shareable with the public and employers. Students genuinely enjoyed (Ainley and Hidi 2014) the different creative format of presenting their learning and were inspired to enact change in marketing practice.

Overall, this research offers an innovative approach to embedding ERS into the curriculum through assessment that is successful at stimulating deep learning, inspiring action, and developing employability skills.

Poster 3. Co-creating a manifesto for co-creation (Callum Paterson, Celine Caquineau, Rea Michalopoulou) Presented in-person only.

It is broadly accepted that students should be at the heart of everything we do at the University of Edinburgh. Indeed, across the University, we embrace that the student voice should be included in discussions and decision-making. Yet many of us have a tendency to overlook the immense value students can both bring and benefit from by being true partners in co-creation.

The Student Engagement Strategy Group, a subgroup of the Curriculum Transformation Project, has been developing a Manifesto for Co-Creation, which aims to set out what we mean by co-creation in the University and how both staff and students can work together to make this a reality. Co-creation can empower students to bring their perspectives and new innovations to learning and teaching. This can bridge the gap in student engagement, create more inclusive and relevant learning and teaching, and enhance the University's offering to students both now and in the future. This becomes even more relevant in an artificial intelligence-enabled world, where exploring more authentic forms of assessment is essential, and students' expertise and voices are key factors in supporting this transformation. This benefits the University, offers more rewarding teaching for staff, and prepares students for life beyond graduation by improving the value of their learning.

Our poster will exhibit the assessment and feedback elements of the Manifesto for Co-Creation. Our vision is that our poster will act as a living canvas for conference attendees to annotate with stickers and comments to reflect their current experiences of, and our shared aspirations for, co-creation. Feedback from delegates will be invaluable as we move towards finalising the Manifesto for Co-Creation, before it is shared across the University.

Poster 5. Investigating the effectiveness of self and peer assessment of group work using the digital platform WebPA in large biomedical sciences pre-honours courses (Presented by Elizabeth Davenport, and co-authored with Alethea Kelsey and Jane Taylor) Presented in-person only.

Group work is increasing becoming a common feature of courses in higher education and is an expected graduate skill requirement for future employers. Self and peer assessment of team members in a group task is an evidenced-informed approach to encourage student engagement and promote collaborative learning. Furthermore, it offers a strategy for markers to assess student contribution to a group project, which would otherwise prove challenging. However, the criteria that students are asked to assess themselves on, and how the self and peer marks contribute to the overall group work grade may impact how accurately and honestly students mark themselves and their peers.

WebPA is an online platform for self and peer assessment of group work. It allows students to mark themselves and their team members against specific criteria. The marks are calculated into a contribution factor which can then be applied to the group mark to generate individual marks for each student. An advantage of WebPA is that it provides an efficient automated and anonymous way to conduct peer assessment in large courses.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of using WebPA to conduct self and peer assessment of group work. Comparisons will be made between a course that uses a manual peer assessment method and two courses that have adopted the use of WebPA. Importantly, reflections from the student experience of using WebPA will be reported. Furthermore, the study will explore whether the self and peer assessment criteria and how the assessment contributes to the students' individual course grade impacts the range of marks students choose to give. Conclusions drawn from this analysis have the potential to influence the design of self and peer assessments for group project work in the future.

Poster 6. Introduction of a digital training resource to support the assessment feedback practice of clinicians teaching in Higher Education - A qualitative study (Presented by Vanessa Mather, and co-authored with Valentina Ferlito and Veronica Davey) Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

This poster will present the results of a qualitative study that tested a digital training resource to support the feedback practice of clinician educators.

Following submission of assessments, postgraduate taught (PGT) students within CMVM may receive feedback from a clinician educator (CE). The CE may lack formal pedagogic training, defined as completion of PgCert Clinical Education or similar as a minimum. CEs were surveyed about their experiences of providing assessment feedback. 57 responses were received. 65% (n=37) respondents had not completed a PgCert Clinical Education or similar. 61% (n=35) of respondents found the process of providing assessment feedback challenging. 72% (n=41) of respondents confirmed that they would welcome an interactive, online, digital training resource (DTR) to support the development of their assessment feedback practice. A DTR is in the process of being developed and this will be trialled amongst CEs in March 2025. We will then use a qualitative approach (semi-structured interviews) to explore the acceptability and feasibility of the DTR and the CEs' perceptions of their feedback practice post engagement with the resource. The study will be oriented around the following question:
Does engagement with a DTR support the development of the CE in their approach to providing feedback to PGT students? Analysis of data will be complete by June 2025.

Poster 7. Empowering students to use their own learning analytics as feedback (Cari Romans, James Slack, Andrew Ishak, Katherine Scott, Elia Muller, Milo Campbell) Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

Actively engaging with their own learning analytics can provide 'self-feedback' to students, which can increase agency, deepen understanding, drive improvement, and enhance their learning. The University's virtual learning environment, Learn, has simple learning analytics for students that could inform self-reflection and support students to take ownership of their learning journey.

To effectively use this data, students need guidance around the available learning analytics. And they need staff to build Learn courses in ways that empower students to access their own learning data. In Information Services, the Learning Analytics in UltRA project (LAURA), part of the VLE Excellence Programme, is working with the Learn Service Team and with Student Interns to:

-Explore how students can make the most of the learning analytics available to them in Learn.
-Develop guidance and training for students to enable them to leverage their learning analytics to take greater ownership of their learning journey and strategies.
-Identify ways staff can support student agency in using their own VLE learning analytics.

Student guidance is available on SharePoint, and live sessions are offered for students each term. Teaching teams and staff wishing to empower students to use their own learning data to provide additional feedback can support students in several ways:

-Use Learn's progress tracking tool in courses and ensure students know how to use it.
-Use Learn's Overall Mark option as a formative mark and include formative assessments in the course.
-Share best practice guidance for understanding and using their learning analytics in Learn.
-Where needed, offer human guidance and insight around using their data for personal growth.

Learning analytics has a role to play in students' self-reflection and ownership of their learning journey. With a few actions, staff can empower students with their own data.

Poster 8. Challenges in implementing and assessing small-scale reflective exercises in laboratory work (Mairi Haddow) Presented in-person only.

Assessing practical ability in the laboratory poses challenges for both students and staff. Assessment of labs purely by lab report means a student can get excellent marks for "lab work" whilst at the same time working in an unsafe manner with poor time-management and weak practical skills. However, assessing students in real time places unrealistic pressures on students and puts extra demands on expensive staff time.

Here we discuss the results of a two-year trial where we investigated the ability of students to assess themselves in both practical work and lab reports. A small number of marks were awarded for engaging with reflective exercises each week in the lab, where students rated themselves on their ability in each practical learning outcome. After each lab, students could follow up their reflection with actions, but this was not assessed. At the end of each lab module, students were asked to write an (assessed) reflective summary about their lab experiences and how they had improved. We collected student opinions on this form of self-assessment via a survey. Early indications show that whilst some students really benefitted from being able to articulate their newly acquired skills, many students found the process tedious, and some even used generative AI to "self-reflect", highlighting the disruptive role of AI in coursework! Furthermore, where the reflective exercises did not contribute to a final mark, engagement was poor.

Thus, we have learned that any benefits gained by introducing reflective exercises is negated by the additional administration and marking and is not necessarily easier than direct observation of students' lab practice.

Poster 9. Assessment practices for creativity and professional growth in data visualisation education (Presented by Shane Sheehan and co-authored with Suzanne Goopy) Presented in-person only.

This poster presents creative teaching strategies developed to enhance student engagement and learning in a master's-level data visualisation course. The course blends foundational theory with hands-on, pen-and-paper activities, encouraging both creative thinking and a deep understanding of data communication through visualisation and storytelling. Assessment design is approached through a sustainable and professional lens, allowing students to demonstrate their understanding of 'data visualisation' in ways that reflect their individual goals and contexts.

A central feature of the course is kinaesthetic learning via tutorials and assessment: students actively engage in sketching, diagramming, and visual encoding as a way to explore and internalise core concepts. These tactile activities promote critical thinking and help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, fostering essential visual communication and problem-solving skills.

The poster showcases examples of recent student work that illustrate growth in both creative and theoretical dimensions. Evidence highlights how combining traditional and digital techniques enriches learning and supports assessments tied to socially and professionally relevant tasks. This inclusive approach supports students with a wide range of experiences, helping them connect academic work to broader life contexts.

By featuring diverse media, authentic outputs, and innovative assessment formats, the course promotes creativity and confidence. The poster offers practical insights into how this teaching methodology can be adapted across disciplines to design meaningful assessments that mirror professional practices and prepare students for dynamic work environments.

Poster 10. Student challenges in assessment and feedback (Lee-Ann Simpson, Paul Smyth) Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

Across the University, assessment and feedback is handled in a multitude of different ways within Learn, the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). This creates significant challenges for both the staff and student experience and is highlighted via the NSS Scores and staff feedback.

Analysis undertaken via the VLE Excellence programme identified that across the University, there were over 60 different assessment variations (i.e. group essay/group presentation/video presentation/video podcast etc.) being delivered during the 23/24 academic year. Supporting these assessment variations are multiple workflows within and across Schools leading to many offline processes, particularly around double-blind marking.

It was identified that, whilst local requirements may differ, at a university-level, the below assessment types can be grouped into those most commonly used:

-Essay Submission: Any paper in text, including lab reports;
-Media Submission: Any multimedia presentation or asset;
-Group Submission: Any submission where several students work as a collective group.

These three categories encompass more than 80% of the in-course assessment being delivered. To help support staff and students by removing barriers and frustrations, the LOUISA project will focus on agreed common assessment types being utilised across the University, using learning technology.

This poster will highlight the key challenges for students across these three assessment types that the LOUISA project will strive to resolve.

Poster 11. Enhancing coding assignments through open-source technology (James Stix) Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

Inclusive assessment is pivotal in ensuring equitable educational outcomes for all students, regardless of their diverse backgrounds and abilities. This poster explores the integration of Noteable, a cloud-hosted digital platform developed by EDINA, in transforming assessment and feedback practices within higher education by providing course-integrated access to Python coding assignment tools. By leveraging Noteable's robust features, educators can design and implement assessments that cater to a wide range of student needs, promoting fairness and accessibility.

Poster 12. Integrating student and staff perspectives: A reflective framework for evaluating assessment and marking (Franziska McManus, Laila Dabab Nahas) Presented in-person only.

We will present a poster showcasing a reflective framework to evaluate assessment and marking as part of course development. While the University of Edinburgh has resources for staff to improve courses before they run (e.g. the ELDeR scheme; https://information-services.ed.ac.uk/learning-technology/learning-design/elder), there are no resources available to support post-course evaluation. We have developed a series of questions around themes central to assessment and feedback, such as the marking and moderation processes, hidden curriculum, and authentic assessment. These questions sit within a broader framework for course development that forms the basis of a workshop between course organiser(s) and teaching assistant(s). The goal of the reflective framework is to save time for course organisers and create a systematic course evaluation process, by:

• Creating a space to synthesise viewpoints and reflect on data generated during the course. The questions, developed in collaboration with a student intern, encourage empathy with the student experience and integrate feedback collected in the student-staff liaison committee and post-course survey. Our mediated discussion format allows horizontal idea-sharing between course organisers and teaching assistants, giving teaching support staff a bigger voice in course development than is traditionally the case.
• Creating clear and actionable goals to be completed before the next iteration of the course. The workshop is scheduled soon after marking ends, allowing changes to be made on a longer timeframe.
• Facilitating writing of the reflective account submitted by the course organiser to the board of studies. Notes written during the workshop create a structured commentary covering a range of themes.

For courses with limited teaching support, the framework will be used as a flexible tool to support either self or peer-supported reflection.

Presenting a poster at the Learning & Teaching Conference 2025 will allow us to raise awareness of this reflective framework and give course organisers an opportunity to contribute towards its development. An interactive component will allow conference participants to suggest questions or topics, which will give us valuable feedback about what is important to include.

Poster 13. Co-creation with alumni enhances the learning environment from course proposal through to assessment (Ellie Devenish-Nelson, James Sinclair) Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

The online MSc Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health (BWEH) uses alumni widely as guest tutors, to fill gaps in teaching team subject knowledge, share practitioner experiences and increase representation, who are perceived extremely favourably by students. Typically, our tutors are not involved in co-creation of courses from the proposal stage. Co-creation with students can result in increasing engagement with a curriculum, but co-creation with alumni appears not to be commonly utilised. In 2023 we gathered several experienced professionals in finance who were currently on programme or are BWEH graduates together to harness their expertise to co-develop a proposal for Conservation Finance, a new elective course that fills a disciplinary gap in our current portfolio. Together, we co-created the course proposal and subsequent content for course delivery. Of particular value was the alumni's insight into options for assessment format and delivery, based on what assessments they had valued during their time on our programme. This allowed us to co-create an authentic, diverse assessment portfolio that focuses on real-world application and constructivist learning, through peer-based co-creation of knowledge and development of critical thinking skills. We reflect on lessons learned from engaging alumni in teaching and learning and specifically, the implementation of these co-created assessments. Through this process, we will gain a better understanding of the value of including alumni in co-creation practices for transforming learning and teaching.

Poster 14. Translation software: A reflection on assessments (David August) Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

The University of Edinburgh is home to a thriving community of international students, and for many, English is not their first language. With the ever-increasing sophistication and availability of translation software, students are no longer as reliant on their English language skills – both for coursework and everyday tasks. Whilst there are many aspects of this development that are welcome—increased support for communication, reduced impact of regional accents, increased accessibility and diversity—this appears to be having an unintended effect on student exam outcomes. Lessons learned recently in the School of Chemistry appear to show that students with low English language skills are achieving high grades throughout their coursework, only to perform extremely poorly in their final exam(s). Why? One hypothesis is that students can now rely on translation software so completely, that there is no longer a need to use, and therefore naturally improve, their English language skills whilst studying and living in the UK. This works until the students find themselves in a situation where access to this software is restricted – creating a further distinction between coursework and in-person exams. Whilst work still needs to be carried out to confirm this hypothesis, this poster aims to initiate discussion on the experience of staff and students with translation software to date and how we can best support best practice in future.

Poster 15. Improving the digital exams experience for students and staff (Karen Howie, Colin Forrest)

Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

The FLORA Project brought together Schools and Deaneries, the Disability Learning Support Service, the Timetabling and Examinations Team, Academic Planning and Information Services to tackle the growing demand for digital exams and improve the experience for students and staff. It worked alongside the LOUISA project which is focusing on assessment and feedback within learning technology to provide a more consistent student and staff experience.

We have taken testimony from students and staff about their experience of digital exams through workshops, interviews and focused discussions. Not only is the number of exams increasing, with over 87,000 student sittings in the last academic year, the demand for digital exams is growing. We are constrained by our available space and hindered by our current technology suite, with eight systems in use for digital exams, no reliable data about the number of digital exams and no central service providing oversight. The support for digital exams is currently spread over different people, groups and services. If there are issues, there is no single body who can act upon a full picture of what exams are happening and how they are being supported.

Although the project is now paused, it unearthed a huge amount of interesting information about the digital exams landscape across the institution and also speak to other institutions about how they were solving similar problems. We spoke to staff and students, mapped out workflows, analysed data and highlighted risks.

This poster will summarise what we learned students, staff and other Universities about digital exams and provides a possible set of next steps.

Poster 16. Student-Led, Individually-Created Courses (SLICCs) – demonstration of a scalable experiential learning course format (Simon Riley, Gavin McCabe) Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

From the outset 10 years ago, the SLICCs initiative (https://sliccs.ed.ac.uk/) identified key principles of enabling student agency and co-creation, shifting the focus from knowledge accrual to delivering, supporting, and assessing a wider array of future skills and graduate attributes, through transformative reflective learning and authentic assessment. The aim was to provide a generic, flexible, and scalable framework using a structured e-portfolio. The SLICC offers students a safe and well-supported experiential learning environment for experimentation. SLICCs can also enable students to successfully work together in multi-year interdisciplinary teams. Students can explore 'wicked problems', learn from challenges, and indeed what could be considered 'mistakes' in more traditional assessment paradigms which would have a negative impact on their grades and willingness to experiment and take risks. SLICCs offer a consistent approach to feedback, with formative events at proposal and an interim report stage that is essentially a draft of the summative final reflective report. This formative feedback uses templates to ensure the focus is on students developing their academic, professional and perhaps personal skills, and gaining the most from their defined learning journey. Assessment using a defined rubric is robust, offering a clear range and strong agreement between markers. The SLICCs framework is now used by around 40 courses across all three of our Colleges and in multiple schools, through undergraduate and postgraduate study.

Student feedback has indicated that undertaking a SLICC becomes transformative in the way they view their approaches to learning:

'I feel like my whole attitude to learning has changed because of the process.'

This poster will offer:

1. An overview of the SLICCs workbook, framework, and assessment process, together with the supporting resources, and how these are being used by both staff and students to enable experiential learning, at scale.

2. Exemplars showing the flexibility for different types of experiential activities, and then the range of student approaches in capturing their own learning journeys.

3. Insight into some of the different ways the SLICCs approach can flexibly support experiential learning within and across disciplines.

Poster 17. Exploring AI-Generated personas for assessment and feedback: An Edinburgh Medical School 300 Initiative (Brian Mather) Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

As part of the Edinburgh Medical School 300 celebrations, this project leverages the use of AI-generated personas, integrating them with knowledge bases to engage students in dynamic, context-rich interactions. The initial focus is on historical figures, such as Sophia Jex-Blake, but the ultimate aim is to test and refine this technology for transformative applications across all disciplines.

Using generative AI and educator-defined knowledge bases, the personas are designed to deliver:
· Formative Feedback: Immediate, iterative feedback during interactions helps students refine communication, critical thinking, and analytical skills. This iterative process fosters self-reflection and deeper learning.
· Summative Feedback: Transcripts or recordings of interactions could provide robust evidence for evaluation, enabling assessors to review progress and offer tailored feedback.

While the project initially highlights historical personas, its scope extends far beyond this use case. AI-driven personas and knowledge bases can be adapted for:

· Healthcare Education: Simulated patient scenarios to practise diagnostic reasoning and consultation skills.

· Interdisciplinary Learning: Virtual collaborations with AI personas representing professionals from various fields.

· Remote Learning: Providing immersive, accessible assessment tools for students worldwide.

By testing these technologies in a controlled context, the initiative aims to develop scalable tools that can personalise assessment, deliver meaningful feedback, and transform teaching across disciplines.

Aligned with the "Innovation and Technological Opportunities" theme, this initiative leaves a legacy of impactful, future-ready solutions for assessment and feedback, while celebrating the rich history of Edinburgh Medical School.

Poster 18. 3 Stars and 1 Wish: Small and frequent student reflections to promote a sense of wonder and a community of vulnerability (Pawel Orzechowski, Elaine Mowat, Karim Rivera Lares, Clare Llewellyn, Bea Alex) Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

3 Stars and 1 Wish (3s1w) is an assessment method encouraging students to engage in frequent self-reflection. We will describe how it works, who uses it and our current study analysing its benefits. Since 2019 it was used by over 1000 students on 25 different Courses across Business School, EFI and Medicine.

The technique was originally inspired by reflection practices in primary schools (Mullane, 2013) and has since undergone several iterations. The 3s1w is a short frequent self-reflection written about each piece of learning (e.g. lecture, badge). Each student lists 3 things which they found new/interesting/curious (stars) and 1 thing which they wish to understand better (wish). We explored variations in terms of marking, openness and frequency, and alternative prompts (e.g. "Like, Wish, Wonder").

This “assessment for learning” (not “assessment of learning”) (Black, 2003; Dylan, 2011) leverages both self- and community-insights. It draws inspiration from 'liberating structures' (Lipmanowicz, 2013), lightly-constraint activities designed to empower students to share their insights equitably. We also take inspiration from the concept of a Gratefulness Journal where individuals are frequently asked to list "things we are grateful for" encouraging a mindset where they notice and appreciate such positives. The same can happen as learners are 'looking out for' things that bring them joy in the course. Since students see each other’s posts, we also observed a 'Community of Vulnerability' - a space where students feel safe to admit their struggles, and see that they are not alone. The "wish" aims to replace the fear and stigma of being confused or lost, with a sense of pride in one's educational effort. This approach promotes sustainable growth over maintaining a false facade of constant high achievement. The additional benefit of 3s1w is that the teaching team has a constant feedback loop of what content is being absorbed well and where the students struggle.

Presentation will crucially include the student’s perspective and early results of our academic study of 23 course instances (some continuously for over 3 years) using 3s1w at the Usher.

References:
Black, P. et al. (2003). Assessment for Learning: Putting it into Practice.
Dylan Wiliam, D. (2011) What is assessment for learning?
Lipmanowicz, H. & McCandless, K. (2013). The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures.
Mullane, J. (2013), Three stars and a wish

Poster 19: Skills for Success Framework (Lorna Devlin) Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

This poster will present the Skills for Success Framework, which will replace Graduate Attributes as the University of Edinburgh's employability model.

This framework will be: **Embedded** across programmes and courses; **Surfaced** by academic and professional services staff; and **Articulated** by students. It is a non-exhaustive common frame of reference to be contextualised to academic discipline and curriculum design. It will be complementary to discipline-specific understanding, knowledge, and skills; and integrated into our student support ecosystem, and wider student experience, to enhance student development. The skills for success framework will be unique to every student - with their own starting points and journey which will shape them as individuals.

The rapid pace of change means graduates no longer have clearly defined career paths when they leave university. We will equip them not only with a -class degree, but with the skills to adapt in an ever-changing world. We're aiming to create a curriculum that creates highly employable graduates with the knowledge and transferable skills to succeed in the modern workplace. This will give students more control over their degrees, combining traditional academic knowledge with opportunities to develop the full range of skills needed to succeed in the modern workplace.

The Framework has been Developed by the Curriculum Transformation Future Skills Working Group, using literature reviews, mapping exercises, internal and external benchmarking, extensive professional services and academic consultation, alumni survey, widespread student involvement and employer perspectives. It has been refined through consultation and feedback at School, College and University committees, and supported by Senate Education Committee (SEC) as a replacement for the current Graduate Attributes framework.

The Framework is aligned to:
Strategy 2030: "We will support and promote teaching that focuses on experience, employability and an understanding of the value of creativity, curiosity, and even failure"
Student Vision: "disciplinary experts with advanced specialist skills, knowledge and experience; ready to thrive in a changing world; highly employable".

Poster 20: University Digital Strategy (Paula Gellatly) Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

The University of Edinburgh is committed to fostering a digitally empowered campus that aligns with its values of innovation and sustainability, as set out in Strategy 2030.

Our University Digital Strategy is underpinned by the vision to create a digital environment built around the needs of our staff and students that is both reliable and helps them succeed in their work and studies.

The University Digital Strategy was developed by our whole university community around the five key themes of Digital Estate, People, Research, Teaching and Learning, and Social and Civic Responsibility. The ambitions and principles under these headings include integrating digital tools to foster innovation and uphold the highest standards of ethical research, enhancing coherence and continuity in teaching provision through programs such as the Curriculum Development Project and innovative assessment methods. A commitment to social and civic responsibilities, as evident in our goal to achieve net-zero carbon by 2040, promoting sustainability through initiatives like Green IT and enable the ethical adoption of artificial intelligence. In terms of People, through the University Digital Strategy, we aim to ensure everyone will have access to essential digital services, tools, and training, ensuring our community has the necessary skills to thrive in a digital world.

Our operational focus encompasses the development of a safe, secure, and inclusive digital environment. This includes a robust digital estate that seamlessly integrates physical and virtual accessibility, underpinned by principles like Human-Centred Design and continuous improvement. The anticipated outcomes include an improved experience for students, staff, and visitors, an accessible and inclusive campus, and a flexible, efficient learning and working environment that fosters a sense of community and belonging.

Overall, the strategy aims to enhance the University of Edinburgh's position as a leader in digital innovation and educational excellence, while staying true to our core values and societal commitments.

Poster 21: Trialling the Action Feedback Protocol: Bringing students into the feedback journey in the School of GeoSciences (Frederik Dahl Madsen and Kay Douglas) Presented in-person and on Miro Board, Conference Teams site.

Students are conditioned throughout their educational journey to perceive the assessment-process as an assembly-line: they submit an assessment; it gets assessed; the cycle repeats. In this 'assessment production line', the student voice is disregarded in feedback, and thus the students arrive at university as "professional" passive learners

Our proposed solution: Utilising the Action Feedback Protocol (AFP) as a toolbox for assessment feedback. Heriot-Watt has recently – and successfully – turned their approach to assessment feedback around from unidirectional to a continuous conversation between the assessor and the assessed. By enrolling the AFP, designed by Maclaren and Farrington (2023), the University is aiming to create feedback literate learners through three simple steps:

3) **Tune the ear:** Equip the students with tools on how to anticipate, make sense, and take action on their feedback. This step acknowledges the fact that receiving marks and feedback can be an emotional experience for many students.
3) **Simplify the message:** Disentangle what we (the markers) and the students think constitutes good feedback. Feedback in this instance should be informative, effective, and actionable. The AFP thus uses the 'three comments approach', in which three simple comments are given in response to a piece of assessed work, in the following order: Motivational, Informational, Feed-Forward.
3) **Encourage Action:** Finally, we need to encourage the students to take action. For each feedback comment the student has been given, they are encouraged to write an action point, that they will complete for the next assessment.

We trialed the AFP approach to assessment feedback in two Honours courses in the School of GeoSciences, and found an overwhelmingly positive response from both students and staff. We strongly encourage other courses to adopt this approach to feedback, to lighten the marking load and homogenise the marking experience and empower the student journey in the feedback process.