

Rethinking Assessment: Inclusive Assessment & Standards in a Dynamic & Changing World

Collaborative Dialogue Session

Why are you receiving this in advance of the event?

QQI wish to use this event as a platform to explore the need for, and potentially kickstart the development of, a set of national principles on Assessment for Inclusion. During the conference, the audience will hear from a UCD-based project team who have already developed a framework for Assessment for Inclusion, and a set of draft principles for their institutional context.

Once this project team have presented the project and the framework to the audience, all in attendance will break out into groups to discuss them, and explore their appropriateness for use of the principles, with modifications and adaptations, at the national level.

We wanted to provide you with these principles and the questions you'll be exploring in advance so that you can reflect on them before you attend the event.

What questions will we ask you to discuss with your group on the day?

The three questions you'll be asked to discuss and feedback on as a group are:

1. What in your view, is the overarching aim of inclusive assessment?
2. What are the strengths of the draft principles proposed, and what is missing from them for your context?
3. What are the biggest challenges to implementing a set of principles like these in practice?



(DRAFT) UCD Assessment¹ for Inclusion Framework:

Guidance for designing inclusive assessment and feedback approaches.

This Framework Aims

to support staff and students to reflect on, design and implement inclusive assessment and feedback practice and policies. (*Note this is an abridged draft version*).

What do we mean by ‘Inclusive Assessment’ and ‘Assessment for Inclusion’?

In higher education today, there is ever more diversity among our students, yet traditional assessment approaches have not always been suited to their needs. *Assessment for Inclusion*, also termed *inclusive assessment*, aims to foster equitable assessment and feedback practices that give all students the opportunity to effectively demonstrate their learning and achieve success. As Morris, Milton and Goldstone (2019) put it, ‘*inclusive assessment processes provide for all students whilst also meeting the needs of [a] specific group*’ (p. 437). McArthur (2021) argues that assessment for inclusion should also aim to support assessment for social justice involving transformative change, which examines what are the causes of any assessment inequalities. Assessment for inclusion is also about maintaining standards and supporting fair outcomes.

Why Assessment for Inclusion?

Assessment for inclusion aims to support ‘equity’, ‘fairness’ and ‘justice’ (fair outcomes) for all students in higher education, including supporting all students to succeed (student success); developing students’ sense of belonging (belonging); supporting social inclusion and social justice; developing staff and students’ professional and personal values. Fairness can mean different things to different people and is often described as either interactional, procedural or distributive fairness (Vander Schee & Birrittella, 2021).

The Context and the Self are Central to Assessment for Inclusion

The Context

The context strongly impacts on how assessment and feedback are designed and implemented. The context can be at the level of the module, programme (usually strongly impacted by the discipline), institutional and more widely impacted at national and societal levels (i.e. at micro, macro and meso levels) (see Figure 1).

The Self

Central to the design process (See Figure 1) is giving attention to your own and your students' self-awareness around issues that may impact on the inclusivity of your assessment and feedback approaches. Some reflective questions to support this include, for example: *What are your personal/professional educational values underpinning assessment and feedback? Do you think assessment for inclusion is for all students or for certain groups? Why do you think this? What is your role in assessment and feedback (identity)? Do students have a role to play? In what way?.....*

Consider the underlying Inclusive Assessment Principles

One way to consider what might improve your practice and policies, is to explore whether your assessment and feedback approaches align with some of these common inclusive assessment design

¹ Assessment includes *Assessment of, for and as learning*. National Forum, (2017) *Expanding our Understanding of Assessment and Feedback in Irish Higher Education*, Dublin: National Forum

principles. Principles are guiding statements as they are situated in the middle ground between the more theoretical literature and the practice wisdom guiding everyday enactment of assessment literacy (Kremmel & Harding, 2020). Based on literature and a series of research interviews and workshops, the following are some suggested principles.

NB: Not all principles need to be addressed in any single assessment or feedback approach or context. They will have different emphasis in different contexts, times, disciplines, student groups, etc.. Reflect on these and consider either a) which principles(s) is an easy win to start on, or b) which may have most impact in the short or long term.

Assessment for Inclusion Design Principles

#	Assessment and feedback approaches should:	For example:
1	Be empowering	giving voice to students, co-designing, judging their own work..
2	Be authentic	relevant, collaborative, personalised, linked with identity of learners..
3	Be diverse across a programme	different methods across stages/levels in a programme..
4	Be manageable	consider load, space, appropriate weighting, equitable effort..
5	Be flexible	flexible deadlines, different approaches..
6	Allow choice	in methods, feedback approaches, topics..
7	Be scaffolded	sequenced, continuous, and integrated to support learning..
8	Be transparent	articulate a clear purpose, accessible formats, clear documentation and clear criteria..
9	Be culturally responsive	responsive to students from different cultural backgrounds..
10	Support active citizenship	develop ideas and actions to support others in society..

Bibliography and References

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Figure 1: UCD Assessment for Inclusion Framework.



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UCD Assessment for Inclusion Framework

To support equity, fairness and justice (fair outcomes)
for all students

