

SLICE of Assessment

Intended area for development

Paul

Idea of PGs taking control of their own skills development, giving each other feedback and reflecting on their own progress.

Plan is to devise some kind of deliverable that will support and have an impact across whole PhD cohort, possibly working towards a development away day type event at the end of June. This could involve a skills audit activity, posters (2nd years), oral presentations (3rd years), with the students leading/facilitating the conference programme. This would allow PhD students to show off a bit as well as having definite deliverables.

At the next meeting, I'll present a draft plan to get feedback from the group.

Ken

Idea is to explore the lab assessments and how to overcome the marking overload through the introduction of variety in the methods used, i.e. different ways for students to present their data, similar to what they need to be able to do as research scientists.

May explore aspects of CAA to identify different areas of the degree where CAA might support this. Use of £1000 grant to take local existing student and look at how could improve assessment methods, identify approaches student would have liked. Can then trial these ideas with others from a group of 20 we have access to. (Students *want* to do lab work, so this would be like students developing lab work approaches for us!)

Next time, I'll come with an update on thoughts/plans.

Mick

I will explore further the PG student assessment in upgrades/vivas and the different dimensions that I need to address:

1. Consistency - introduce "good" procedures to overcome problems in upgrade/viva meetings of judgement/conduct and eliminate procedural variations.
2. Staffing - to support staff who do not currently do doctoral supervision

Idea working on is based around filming an upgrade process to demonstrate/critique both conduct/procedures and experiences for students. It's important that students recognise that defending the upgrade paper or thesis is an experience you want people to go through as a rehearsal for what it means to be an academic - to be criticised/to debate (either academic or practice-based - to intellectually defend yourself plus deal with the emotions this stirs up). It's equally important that staff/panel judge with emotional intelligence. The film would offer an idea of what is expected, to demonstrate good conduct and to give students insight into the assessment process.

I'd like also to try to incorporate some of the ideas around peer assessment ideas that came out of this session.

Next time, I will bring along what I propose to do - possibly send ideas first to the forum so I can compare with and discuss other people's perspective.

Sarah

The suggestion is piloting some form of exam feedback this summer. For example, Paul's idea of picking out some areas where students could improve rather than giving feedback on the whole question.

It would be interesting to run in parallel with the current approach so we could (as a department) discuss the issues & differences in staff workload, student response/feedback, as a measure against what we currently do.

Interested also in Mick's idea of a film to demonstrate the upgrade process, as a way of breaking down what we do to assess.

Want to clarify the 50% rule in the light of the differences in interpretations in sciences.

Interested to explore more the ways in which peer assessment might work, with students asked to reflect on their own/others' work.

Next time, I'll bring back a proposal/ideas/plan on the exam feedback ideas.

Trevor

I have a number of assessment projects I would like to pursue. The most ambitious one is to put all the first-year Engineering Mathematics weekly assignments online. The following features would considerably enhance the offering:

- question templates with random parameters (each student would thereby get a different but pedagogically equivalent online test)
- graduated feedback, tied to the values of the parameters
- automated weekly reports to tutors of their students activity and results
- links to additional learning materials based on students' wrong answers

This would be initially an expensive project but a thoroughly worthwhile investment when spread over the typical shelf life of 5 years or more.