

# Programmatic Assessment: An Overview of Approaches in UK Higher Education

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## 1

### BACKGROUND

Traditional approaches to assessment and feedback have been criticised for their limited scope and lack of alignment with desired learning outcomes (Jessop & Tomas, 2017).

Programmatic assessment initiatives have emerged as a promising approach to address these limitations, moving away from the siloed modular system towards a holistic evaluation of student learning.

## 2

### AIM

Present an overview of the various programmatic assessment initiatives in use across UK higher education institutions (HEIs).

## 3

### METHODOLOGY

A list of UK HEIs was obtained via the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Searched grey literature for the terms "Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment" or "programmatic assessment" and institution name.

## 4

### INITIAL FINDINGS

69/159 (43.4%) institutions have some evidence of engaging with a programmatic assessment initiative.

Four main approaches were identified:

- Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment (TESTA)
- Programme Assessment Strategies (PASS)
- Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF)
- Integrated Programme Assessment (IPA)

## 5 PROGRAMMATIC ASSESSMENT INITIATIVES

TESTA	PASS	LEAF	IPA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Originated at the University of Winchester as National Teaching Fellowship Project (2009-2012)</li> <li>• Holistic approach to reviewing assessment and feedback across a degree with the intent of identifying areas of enhancement and effective practice</li> <li>• 3 core activities: the programme assessment audit; the assessment experience questionnaire; and student focus groups</li> <li>• Most frequently adopted initiative with over 40 institutions in the UK identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Originated at the University of Bradford also as part of a National Teaching Fellowship Project (2009-2012)</li> <li>• Through workshops, introduce key concepts of and current approaches to programme-focussed assessment (PFA)</li> <li>• Assessment is specifically designed to address major programme outcomes rather than very specific or isolated components of the course, in an integrative, authentic and meaningful way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Originated as a collaborative project between Glasgow, Edinburgh, Nottingham and Birmingham</li> <li>• Used curriculum mapping and assessment blueprint to help make assessment a better experience for everyone</li> <li>• Mapping what each course is doing in terms of the learning outcomes for the full programme and in relation to other courses</li> <li>• Blueprinting is looking at the assessment in each course, again in terms of the whole programme and assessments in other courses</li> <li>• The curriculum map informs the assessment blueprint through alignment of objectives to assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based at Brunel University, London, IPA focusses at programme level with a holistic and overarching learning and teaching strategy underpinned by authentic and synoptic assessments</li> <li>• Aimed to eliminate the fragmented approach to learning by modular programmes, reduce the assessment load for staff and students, and improve employability skills</li> <li>• Brunel achieved this by separating study and assessment. Uncoupling teaching and assessment provides the opportunity to set assessment tasks that require students to integrate information from across teaching blocks</li> </ul>

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### NEXT STEPS

This poster presents high-level, initial findings from a study reviewing approaches to programmatic assessment in the UK.

The next steps for this project will be to conduct an in-depth content analysis on the data collected from each institution to determine the extent of implementation and evaluate those UK universities which have adopted a programmatic assessment initiative.

Further steps in my PhD will be to make a set of recommendations to support programmatic level assessment and feedback review processes.



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### REFERENCES

Jessop, T., Tomas, C., 2017. The implications of programme assessment patterns for student learning. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 42, 990-999.