



ASSESSMENT

The Seven Step Quick Guide to
Implement Choice of Assessment Methods
within a Module

Author: Geraldine O'Neill

Email: geraldine.m.oneill@ucd.ie

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Students can experience a variety of assessment as staff design different module assessment methods throughout a programme. Alternatively, students can be given some control by assessment choice within a module. Some competencies in a programme should not be avoided by students, such as academic writing; therefore a mixture of both these approaches is preferable.

	Module Design Stage
Step 1	Consider Which Module: When creating assessment choice 'within a module', consider which modules might be best suited to having an opportunity for students to play to their strengths. For example, modules that have students with a variety of learning needs; with different prior learning; that are learning in different contexts; or in modules with high numbers of special accommodations.
Step 2	Consider Diverse Choices: As students have different strengths, learning styles, different needs and are from different contexts, it is helpful to choose methods that are dissimilar to each other, for example, an oral versus a written assignment. As students have different time-management skills and lifestyle commitments, choice can also include continuous versus end of semester. From the research, it appears two options can often be sufficient choice. See ' <i>UCD Practitioner's Guide</i> '* for some examples.
Step 3	Develop Equity: Having decided on the choice, use the ' <i>Student Information and Equity Template</i> '* consider the equity of effort, standards, feedback, etc. This template will assist in designing the equity between the assessment choices. In addition, this can then be made available to the students at the beginning of the module as a handout and/or available in the VLE environment. This assists the students in making an informed choice.
Step 4	Make the Expectation and Standard Explicit: Create examples of the assessment methods and make these available to the students at beginning of the module. This is not so students can 'copy' assessment answers, but rather that they are exposed to assessments that are less familiar to them, i.e. posters, problem-solving assignments, wikis. In addition, it is good practice that the assessment criteria for both assessment types are also available for the students. See ' <i>UCD Practitioner's Guide</i> ' for some examples*.
	Implementation Stage
Step 5	Implement: Explain the rationale of this approach to the students, i.e. to empower them in their learning. Procedures need to be put in place for students to communicate to the staff their decision on assessment choice. It may be necessary to set a time limit on this, in particular if one option is continuous assessment. Examples of this include an in-class 'signing-off sheet' or an e-mail correspondence. To streamline this, it may be useful to decide that one assessment method is the 'default' assessment, if students have not informed staff of the choice. This could be the more familiar of the two assessments.
Step 6	Support the Process: At the early stage of the module, it may be useful to allow some in-class discussion on the choices, including opportunities for the students to discuss these with staff and/or with other students. As highlighted in the ' <i>Student Information and Equity Template</i> '*, related teaching activities, support for feedback and advice on the assessment must be relatively equitable throughout the module.
	Evaluation Stage
Step 7	Evaluate and Adjust: It is essential to gather feedback from the students, and where relevant the staff, on their experience of this approach. The student questionnaire designed for the project, the <i>PEAMC</i> *, is available to be used, providing its author is acknowledged in any further research/publications. This questionnaire* evaluates themes such as, equity, empowerment, support, anxiety and diversity. In addition more qualitative interviews/focus groups of staff and students are appropriate. Based on these findings, make improvements for the next reiteration of the module. Any evaluation procedures should not conflict with local Institutional evaluation practices.

UCD TEACHING AND LEARNING / RESOURCES

*The [UCD How to Assess Student Learning](#) resource page includes downloads of the '*Student Information and Equity Template*', the '*PEAMC Student Questionnaire*', and '*A Practitioner's Guide to Choice of Assessment Methods within a Module: Case Studies from University College Dublin*'. These are all available at <http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/resources/assessment/howdoyouassessstudentlearning/>

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