

Assessment strategies

The purpose of assessment is to deliver valid, reliable, fair, and manageable assessment. The assessment programme must be designed so that skills and knowledge can be developed in line with the assessment criteria.

There is a range of assessment methods that can be utilised, such as:

- practical exploration or performance
- vlogs, blogs, log books, production diaries
- role play
- articles for journals, press releases, web pages
- production of visual or audio materials, artefacts, products and specimens
- peer and self assessment
 - presentations
 - reports

Peer and self assessment

Self assessment has been shown to improve attainment if it is used consistently. It encourages the reflective habit of mind essential for improvement; it ensures learners take responsibility for their own learning; it focuses attention on criteria for success and increases effort and persistence.

While self assessment is not sufficient on its own, it can provide valuable additional evidence of learning. Ask learners to self assess by providing them with self assessment criteria or helping them to develop their own.

Where appropriate, peer assessment impacts on self assessment by enabling individuals to become self critical and evaluative. It can provide a useful first and second stage prior to tutor assessment.

Learners can generate personal action plans that are followed up prior to assessment. It also generates excellent evidence for Functional Skills, if you are delivering these alongside a BTEC.

Group work

Working in groups is an accepted part of learning within vocational education. There are widely recognised benefits of collaborative group work in terms of learning and skills development. When groups work well, learners can produce quality learning outcomes and develop specific team work skills, as well as generic skills valued by employers.

Most learners can benefit from learning in groups, provided the groups are well managed and there are clear and fair assessment requirements. In a group assignment the learners require an assessment system that allows the opportunity to achieve that reflects the level of contribution made by individuals.

It is important that Assessors clearly identify the purpose of using group work within an assessment:

- Generally, it is not the group work activities themselves that will form the basis of the assessment activity
- It is essential that the individual assessment criteria for the unit identified and each learner's individual contribution in meeting these must be the basis of the assessment decision
- Group learning activities and skills, such as team building, leadership, etc. may be assessed towards gaining transferable skills and recorded as being achieved and feedback given, but they are not part of the assessment decisions for specific units.

Concerns about group assignments can be reduced by:

- helping learners to understand the criteria to be assessed for the group product and process, where process is being assessed
- informing them how individual contributions to the group will be measured and assessed against the unit specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Guidelines on assessing group work

- Group projects should be included in the assessment schedule for a unit only where one or more learning outcomes of the unit indicate that they might be appropriate. In other words, does the learning outcome naturally fit the device of a group assessment?
- Learners should be informed, in detail and in advance, of the basis for assessment of group projects, including the methods to be used to measure the extent of individual contributions
- If the group project or its assessment places on learners an obligation to exercise skills or judgements beyond those required for the subject (e.g. peer assessment), then adequate training should be provided to assist learners to exercise that judgement

- If there is to be peer assessment of the contribution of the learners to a group project, then the process for collecting feedback should be confidential between the individual learner and the Assessor. If peer assessment includes the measurement of the contribution, the method should be clear and simple to use and self assessment should also be included
- A common group grade must not be assigned to all members of the group; individual contributions should be measured and graded against the learning outcomes, the assessment and grading criteria
- Evidence of observation of presentations and discussions (with peers, with Assessors etc.) should be detailed and mapped to criteria in order to provide evidence of achievement of individual contributions
- It is good practice to encourage learners to reflect on what they have learnt from the group work experience and produce a written evaluation
- In some cases, presentations may provide evidence only sufficient for pass criteria, for example where a presentation contained no corroborated detail of individual tasks undertaken by members of the group. In such cases, evidence for higher grades may be achieved through formalised questioning of individual learners mapped to the assessment criteria, or having the learners produce a supplementary report of their activities
- Feedback can be directed to the group with reference to individual contributions and achievement.