

### Lecturers dislikes and likes about assessment methods

A number of the staff commented on the need for a variety of assessment methods, to suit the different topics and students' various learning styles

*'What you need is a variety of assessments across the programme to ensure that everybody gets at least one stab at an assessment they feel good at'*

Dissertations	
☺	☹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunity for the tutor and student to enter into detailed discussion which enables the student to progress</li> </ul> <p><i>'I enjoy the opportunity to have one to one discussions and to see real progress, I like the time I have to look at their drafts and give them feedback'</i></p>	

Examinations	
☺	☹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Forces students to read and think about the topic</li> <li>▪ Expressing yourself under pressure is perceived as a graduate skill and exams help you to practice this</li> <li>▪ Employers expect students to be able to cope under pressure and exams evidence this ability</li> <li>▪ Difficult for students to plagiarise</li> <li>▪ Allow students to synthesise their knowledge</li> <li>▪ Some staff felt that students could perform exceptionally well in exam conditions</li> </ul> <p><i>'they often get off on one in an exam and they fly and you get some real surprises and that's really rewarding in a way that just course work essay often isn't'</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Marking load, particularly with handwritten scripts</li> </ul> <p><i>'you feel that you can't do a good job, its like being a working mother, you know that you can't actually get them all marked and mark them to the best of your ability'</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students elect to revise certain topics and so they are only covering a limited amount of the material</li> <li>▪ Encourage surface short term learning</li> <li>▪ Poorly devised marking criteria which are difficult to apply uniformly</li> <li>▪ Moderation which is time consuming and described as 'boring'</li> <li>▪ Unfairness of assessing an entire year's work on the basis of one session</li> </ul>

Group work	
☺	☹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunity for students to work in a team and develop skills that are perceived to be vital in the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Moderating disagreements amongst students</li> <li>▪ Some students 'carry' others</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ workplace</li> <li>▪ Reduces marking load for lecturers</li> <li>▪ Promotes creativity</li> <li>▪ Students can learn from their peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Issues for students on part-time courses, who struggle to find opportunities to work together</li> </ul>
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To counteract some of the issues identified with group work, lecturers have developed a number of strategies, including the introduction of peer assessment; cancelled lectures replaced with allocated time for the students to have minuted meetings to discuss their group projects; peer and tutor review of individual's contributions.

Some lecturers spoke about the need to actively teach their students the skills to operate effectively within a group as part of the curriculum

Multiple Choice Questions/Short tests	
☺	☹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lecturers aren't obliged to make qualitative judgements.</li> <li>▪ Results attained seemed to reflect the efforts made by the students</li> <li>▪ Can test knowledge</li> <li>▪ Opportunity for continuous assessment which can be helpful as a revision tool</li> <li>▪ Opportunity for formative feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ However some lecturers questioned their ability to develop higher-level skills such as the ability to solve problems, analyse and to develop creative solutions.</li> </ul>

Portfolios	
☺	☹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can be interesting for the reader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can be too descriptive 'an excuse for waffle'</li> </ul>

Practicals	
☺	☹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students involved and enthusiastic <i>'We have a particular module in the vocational course that involves activity and gets year after year a high level of involvement and that's really encouraging for the tutors as well as the students'</i></li> <li>▪ Develops the skills which students will need to have in the work place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff had mixed views on whether they had enough resources to sustain the development and support of practical assignments, which they perceived to be time consuming to set up and maintain.</li> <li>▪ Some students find practicals such as managing events to be very stressful</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students understand the value and relevance of practicals as they can see their application to the workplace</li> <li>▪ Encourage a deeper learning as students place their academic learning in context</li> <li>▪ Some practicals allow for public recognition from for example employers and other students <i>‘But where they feel a judgement is being made about their ability and performance by their peers or certainly by one or more other person and in public, this raises their effort levels and their engagement levels’</i></li> <li>▪ Encourage ownership and choice</li> <li>▪ Visual elements introduced in some practicals can allow students to illustrate a wider diversity of skills.</li> </ul>	
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Presentations	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote creativity</li> <li>▪ Less time to mark</li> <li>▪ Variety</li> <li>▪ Develop communication and research skills</li> <li>▪ Students gain immediate feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Danger that the lecturer is marking superficially i.e. the performance rather than the content</li> </ul>

**Sources for research**

Channell & Associates (2002) Running a Focus Group  
Morgan, D L (1998) Focus Group Kit, Sage Publications Inc  
Robson, C (1993) Real World Research. Blackwell

Client Guide to the Focus Group [www.mnav.com/cligd.htm](http://www.mnav.com/cligd.htm)