

School of Education

'Professional Partnerships in HE: a discussion around the co-creation of assessment to embed employability in the curriculum.'

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Background

- **2019 (enhancing graduate outcomes)**
 - Skills & Employer workshops, conferences & networking events (CCC)
 - Guest speakers: inspirational, local, national, international organisations
 - Work experience / volunteering / Placements
 - Careers guidance, workshops and events (departmentally & centrally)
 - Collaborative events with the SU, NLW, LLL, & other academic departments
 - Visits
 - Piloted learning toolkit
 - Newsletters, announcements, email updates
 - Personal tutoring
 - ABERforward placements
- Graduate outcomes data & fluctuations in student engagement
- **2022-23 (employability in the curriculum)**
 - Alignment with module content – mapping skills and careers
 - Applied for an external grant to support Welsh language development for SoE students
 - Submitted a proposal to L&T to change a year 3 module assessment
 - AU Employability Strategy 2024-29

AU Employability Strategy 2024-2029

SoE DEAP 2024-25

1. Embed employability, enterprise, and skills development across all curricula
 - Different support structures for years 1, 2 and 3.
 - Moving away from passive to active exchanges.
2. Strengthen our connectivity with our alumni and employers
 - Being resourceful: Careers Service, peers.
 - LinkedIn profiles in Year 1 to enhance professional networking /Year 3 for dissertation participants.
3. Ensure work integrated learning is part of every student experience
 - Real-world experiences offered on placement.
 - Problem-based learning activities.
4. Tailor support and initiatives to meet diversity within our student cohort
 - Student voice
 - Variety in assessments to support learner preference.
5. Ensure we are emerging, future thinking and institutional in our approach
 - Further diversity in assessment type.
 - Utilising Professional Partnerships for curriculum design.

(5) Key-themes that emerged throughout the brainstorming process

Staff perspective


1. We value the diversity of our learners and want to support & challenge them.
2. Attaching formal elements requires engagement.
3. Focus on academic requirements.
4. Work readiness.

Student perspective

1. "If I could just sit and tell you what I know about this question / topic / theme!"
2. Motivation: priority engagement with assessed elements.
3. Late engagement with AU Careers
4. Identification & articulation of skills.

How can we respond?

- ✓ Recognition & enhanced visibility of the Careers Service
 - ✓ Planning, contributing to assessment workshops & marking on the module.
- ✓ Most graduates will attend a job interview and engage in verbal exchanges that require logical reasoning
 - ✓ Create an assessment that fosters essential employability skills.
 - ✓ Replicates that type of environment / structure.
 - ✓ Informed by those with knowledge of the course materials and employer expectations.
- ✓ Embedding a step-by-step process so that students are provided with structured opportunities to practice and receive feedback on an employability skill as part of their assessment.
 - ✓ Support skills identification and practical application.
 - ✓ Gain academic knowledge whilst also developing essential skills to succeed as graduates.
 - ✓ Working and learning from each other.



Structured viva: A3 Educational Poster with 10 min Oral Defense (40%)

- Year 3 core module (no placement)
- Topic: Emotional & Social Development
- Students will justify and evaluate the content of the poster by oral defense, responding to a set of questions.
- Audience: the public.
- 4 questions:
 - 3 they have prepared for
 - and a 4th from a list of 10 possible questions.
 - **academic skills** (knowledge, evidence, coherence, coverage and criticality)
 - **presentation skills** (delivery and support materials) assessed.
- Poster displayed as a prompt (no additional notes).
- Environment: a teaching room on campus, seated, 2 markers (SoE academic member of staff, and a marker from the Careers team/could be adapted to a partner from industry).

Step-by-step approach

(reflective process)

1. Introduce the assignment, LOs, activities, topics and marking criteria - explain in detail.
2. Careers Workshop 'How to prepare for an interview', a series of small tasks embedded (generic, relating to their own experiences).
3. Follow-up session, replicating the Careers session but with a focus on the assignment themes and assessment criteria.
4. Mentimeter to gather students' perspectives: generate an FAQs document (& to inform the next workshop).
5. Poster Workshop.
6. Assignment support drop-in.



Overcoming Barriers

Huxham, Campbell & Westwood (2012)

- Advantages and disadvantages of oral assessments investigated
- Measuring preference and performance
- Resistance
 - Vivas rarely used for UG assessment
 - Marking
 - The perception that oral examinations are problematic
 - Bias
- Found no evidence of disadvantage accruing from oral assessments to particular groups of students, nor of the need to restrict orals to particular types of questions (although a small sample size).
- Anxiety 'a feature of an oral assessment' - associated with more thorough preparation.

Benefits of oral examinations

- Support learner preference
- Supportive of authenticity & personal identity
- Replicate real-world professional skills
 - *communication, participation in meetings, preparation for interviews.*
- Discourages surface learning and encourages deeper critical research and thinking
- Reduce plagiarism: *authentic, personal interpretation, in-depth knowledge* (Nallaya et al., 2024).

Reflections

- Curriculum design: Although we have been intentional with our curriculum design, we have experienced some fear from students; breaking down the process and explaining it has helped [example].
- Assessments (variety) can be designed to replicate real-world scenarios and workplace tasks, ensuring that students are evaluated on skills that are directly relevant to their future careers.
- Professional partnerships contribute to the development of effective assessment frameworks that bridge the gap between academia and the workplace.
- Contributions and accountability from all staff.
- Confidence to build upon this model and work with other professionals to inform a new module 'Professional Practice' for 2025-26.

References

Abuzied, A.I.H., Nabag, W.O.M. (2023). 'Structured viva validity, reliability, and acceptability as an assessment tool in health professions education: a systematic review and meta-analysis'. *BMC Med Educ.*23, 531

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Nallaya, S., Gentili, S., Weeks, S., & Baldock, K. (2024). The validity, reliability, academic integrity and integration of oral assessments in higher education: A systematic review. *Issues in Educational Research*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Jun 2024, 629-646

DEAP 2024-25

- Fully immerse in professional networking opportunities
- Involve students
- All staff involved
- Personal development encouraged from day one
- Inter^{active} workshops for ^{active} engagement
- Real-world experiences and problem-solving through teaching, learning & assessment.