



Senate

Paper Title	Programme-level approach to assessment
Outcome requested	To consider and endorse a programme-level approach to assessment
Points for Senate members to note and further information	<p>The paper outlines a rationale for a programme-level approach to assessment design, planning and delivery. A programme-level approach would be useful in addressing student satisfaction with assessment and feedback, staff concerns over workload, and strategic ambitions relating to assessment and feedback. The mapping exercise would facilitate the sharing of effective practice between module organisers and create further opportunities for student engagement. There would also be policy-related benefits such as the simplification of curriculum planning and transparency and fairness in workload allocation.</p> <p>The approach is being used productively in parts of the University. The proposal is for the approach to be adopted at institution level to share and increase the associated benefits. A proposed framework and timeline for University-wide engagement is provided within the paper.</p>
Questions for Senate to consider	Do Senate members have any comments on the approach? Are Senate members happy to endorse the approach?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	
Strategy and risk	Queen Mary Strategy 2030
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	Senate only.
Authors	Jonathan Morgan, Chief Governance Officer and University Secretary
Sponsor	n/a

Programme-level approach to assessment

1. This paper promotes a programme-level approach to assessment design, planning and delivery that addresses three strategic imperatives for the University.
 - a) Students are reporting consistently low levels of satisfaction with assessment and feedback through national surveys and internal feedback mechanisms. Key factors include the amount of assessment, bunching of assessment deadlines and the time taken to receive feedback.
 - b) Feedback collected through the staff survey highlights concerns over workloads. The work of assessing students and providing administrative support is a key factor for many members of academic and Professional Services staff.
 - c) Our Strategy describes an approach to assessment and feedback that is focused, streamlined, aligned with progressing learning and supportive of students realising their academic potential.
2. A programme-level approach to assessment is a useful method for addressing these imperatives. Experience has shown that it is effective at reducing the overall amount of assessment by identifying repetition and overlap within and between modules. It also allows assessment-related work to be scheduled in a more balanced way. In addition, the process of mapping learning outcomes and assessments across programmes facilitates the sharing of effective practice between module organisers and is fertile ground for student engagement.
3. There are also policy-related benefits that can arise from adopting a programme-level approach to assessment.
 - a) An outcome of the mapping process is a programme-level framework that in future simplifies curriculum planning, supports a co-ordinated approach to curriculum development and innovation, and helps to explain to students how progression and consistency are achieved across the programme.
 - b) The mapping process, as well as indicating how to reduce the overall burden of assessment, supports transparency and fairness in workload allocation within Schools and Institutes. This in turn provides a meaningful foundation for developing policy on expectations for providing feedback to students.
4. This approach is not new and is already being used productively in parts of the University. The proposal for consideration is therefore to share and increase (considering the implications for joint programmes) the benefits through more co-ordinated, institution-wide adoption of the approach. The intention is that this should be undertaken iteratively, at a pace that allows Schools and Institutes to engage and plan. It is also the intention that policy outcomes should grow out of engagement between staff and students at School and Institute level, which is brought together at the Faculty and University levels, rather than being the starting point.
5. A framework and timeline for University-wide engagement with (initially undergraduate) programme-level assessment is proposed overleaf. Senate is invited to comment on and endorse the approach.

Framework and timeline for an institution-wide initiative on programme-level assessment

Spring Semester 2023

- Schools and Institutes undertake the mapping process, focusing on undergraduate modules for 2023–24 and the aim of reducing assessment and balancing workloads. Schools and Institutes also communicate with students to explain the process and implications for module choices for 2023–24 and to encourage student engagement.
- The Queen Mary Academy engages with Schools and Institutes to highlight relevant resources and help maximise the benefit of the mapping process.
- The Faculties engage with Schools and Institutes to ensure the mapping process is adequately supported and resourced, to identify and build on common issues and effective practice (paying particular attention to joint programmes) and to draw together policy recommendations for consideration by Senate.

Summer 2023

- The outcome of the mapping process as it relates to undergraduate modules for 2023–24 is finalised between Schools and Institutes and the Faculties.
- Schools and Institutes formalise the changes to module assessments and deadlines for 2023–24 and communicate the changes to students.
- The Education Quality and Standards Board engages with the Faculties to develop policy proposals growing out of the mapping process for consideration by Senate, including expectations for providing feedback to undergraduate students in 2023–24.
- Senate considers policy proposals and lessons learnt from the initiative so far.

Autumn semester 2023

- Schools and Institutes review the programme-level framework developed through the previous mapping process and consider how it applies to undergraduate modules for 2024–25. As well as looking for further opportunities to reduce assessment and balance workloads, Schools and Institutes will be encouraged to incorporate more inclusive and authentic forms of assessment.
- The Queen Mary Academy and the Faculties engage with Schools and Institutes as before.
- The Education Quality and Standards Board engages with the Faculties to review the policies for future years.
- Senate considers policies for future years and advises on next steps for the initiative.