

## Assessment Case Study

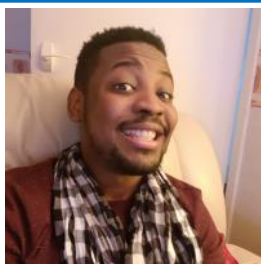
**Getting students involved: Increasing engagement with assessment in an Advantage module**

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**Course:** BSc Applied/Biomedical Science

**Module:** A250BMS- Professional Experience for Health and Life Sciences (HLS) Students

**Student Level:** Undergraduate (Level 5)



### AN EXAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT THAT INVOLVES...

- Summative and formative assessment
- Peer assessment/feedback
- Ongoing/dialogic feedback
- Promoting assessment literacy

### AIMS

The focus of this case study is an HLS Advantage module designed to help students enhance their employment prospects by undertaking some **professional experience** relevant to their career aspirations. The module attracts students from a range of courses within HLS. Having negotiated a professional placement, students are assessed via a reflective log pertaining to the experience. The lecturer evaluated the existing assessment practices with the aim of enhancing student assessment literacy and scope for meaningful engagement with feedback.

### ACTIONS

- The lecturer identified that there were already several support mechanisms in place, such as an assessment **preparation workshop** with opportunities for students to engage with exemplars. However, student attendance at this session was not always high, because many were yet to secure their placements at the time it took place. The **assessment brief was adjusted** so that students were given longer to finalise their placements, in the hope that engagement with this workshop would increase. Also, the **deadline** for sourcing and approving work experience was moved to one calendar month before the summative coursework deadline, to allow more time to find placements.
- To further boost the module's emphasis on ongoing, dialogic feedback (through supervisory meetings, taught sessions, and academic surgeries), **additional drop in sessions were added** (one per semester).
- To try and maximise take-up of drop in opportunities, as well as improving assessment literacy, the lecturer introduced a **formative assessment task** as an integral part of the module. Students are asked to submit a 300 word reflection on two transferrable skills outlined in the final coursework proforma, a month before the summative deadline.

Feedback on this work can be used to drive a specific section (worth 10% of the marks) of the summative coursework.

- The lecturer observed there was scope to improve assessment literacy by providing a **new marking rubric** for the assignment. By addressing each criterion in turn, it was hoped that the new rubric would give students a **deeper understanding** of the assessment task, and could be used to facilitate self- or peer-assessment activities. Importantly, **students were consulted** in the design of the rubric, thereby acting as partners in the process (see Deeley and Bovill 2017).

### INVOLVING STUDENTS IN THE RUBRIC REDESIGN

The processes consisted of a series of three meetings, in which students were asked to:

- **Review the rubric and provide your interpretation of the assessment criteria. What do they "mean" to you? How will their interpretation inform the quality of your work?**
- **Consider the rubric/assessment criteria. What you think a pass, fail or 2.1 or 1st might look like?**
- **Consider whether you would recommend any changes. If so, what are your recommendations?**

As a result of the student consultation, a change **was made to the marks** allocated for having undertaken work experience. Previously, there was an "all or nothing" element to the 80 hours of work experience required for the module, whereby 20% of marks were awarded for 80 hours or more, 10% of marks for 26-79 hours, and nothing for 25 hours or less. Students felt this was unfair, so the module team reconsidered the breakdown.

The responses to these questions informed the **assessment preparation workshop**, as exemplars and activities were used to drive assessment literacy.

The consultation was **well-received** by many students, who were interested in pedagogy and were keen to participate in the process as part of a work-related activity contributing to the module.

The **new marking rubric** is reproduced over the following two pages.

**Getting students involved: Increasing engagement with assessment in an Advantage module—continued**

**IMPACT/FEEDBACK**

The impact of implementing these assessment practices on pass rates/module marks is yet to be measured, but preliminary feedback from students is positive:

- There was some good feedback on the recent MEQ in relation to “how the assessment is broken down and explained”
- “The flexibilities available due to current [covid] situation [are useful], e.g. the drop-in session available in addition to the synchronous sessions”.
- [The new rubric] “improves the assessment...providing greater clarity on the assignment.”

**SCALABILITY**

Most of the practices described here are **scalable to other modules** and subject areas, although it does depend on the cohort size. **On-going dialogue** can be difficult to achieve in a larger module with hundreds of students. The typical cohort size for A250BMS is approx. 60-70, so this is manageable- but as students are from all schools within the HLS faculty, it can be difficult to scale ideas/suggestions up to every student. That said, the functionalities of **Aula has made “mass communications” with students somewhat easier**, e.g. through the community feed.

**MESSAGE TO PEERS**

**Involving students** in any form of re-design or evaluation of assessment/learning practices is very valuable and should be considered for more meaningful engagement on both sides.

**REFERENCE Deeley, S. J. and Bovill, C. (2017)** Staff student partnership in assessment: enhancing assessment literacy through democratic practices. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 42(3): 463-477. (doi:[10.1080/02602938.2015.1126551](https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2015.1126551))

**EXTRACT FROM MARKING RUBRIC (Page 1 of 2)**

Criteria	Section 1: Reflective Log: Number of hours completed  20%	Section 2: Reflective Log: Recording your hours and activities  20%	Section 3: Reflective Log: Reflective practice  50%	Section 4: Reflective Log: Supervisory meeting(s) & response to feedback  10%
<b>Grading</b>				
Outstanding 82, 85, 90, 95, 100%	80 hours or more of professional or work experience has been undertaken	Entries made in section 2 of the reflective log are regular, detailing dates, hours worked, and activities undertaken in the workplace. May include meetings with supervisors/colleagues, notable incidents and what the student has learned. There is an <b>excellent, highly informative but concise account</b> of the experience and <b>evidence of reflection and learning</b> .	The work demonstrates an <b>excellent reflection</b> in relation to the criteria for <b>at least 5 of the transferrable skills</b> to be developed, relating to: Personal Development, Personal Motivation, Organisation & Time Management, Teamwork, Verbal Communication, Written Communication, Research & Analytical Skills, Numeracy and Information Technology. The work is <b>detailed</b> yet <b>concise uses an appropriate reflective framework</b> and is <b>supported by credible academic sources, which are applied excellently</b> using an appropriate referencing system. There is <b>evidence of critical reflection and analyses</b> , which links to personal, academic, or professional development.	The student has attended or included evidence of <b>more than one supervisory meeting</b> . Has provided an <b>outstanding summary</b> of a <b>professional discussion</b> , including a <b>detailed account</b> of how they have responded to feedback (from either their supervisor or the formative task) and information on action plans, SMART/targets created for follow up.
Excellent 72, 75, 78%		Entries made in section 2 of the reflective log are regular, detailing dates, hours worked, and activities undertaken in the workplace, notable incidents and what the student has learned. There is a <b>very good, informative account</b> of the experience and <b>some evidence of reflection</b> .	The work demonstrates a <b>very good reflection</b> in relation to the criteria for <b>at least 5 of the transferrable skills</b> to be developed, relating to: Personal Development, Personal Motivation, Organisation & Time Management, Teamwork, Verbal Communication, Written Communication, Research & Analytical Skills, Numeracy and Information Technology. The work is <b>concise</b> , and it is <b>supported by credible academic sources, which were applied well</b> using an appropriate referencing system. There is good evidence of reflection and <b>some analyses</b> , which links to personal, academic, or professional development.	The student has attended a <b>supervisory meeting and</b> has provided an <b>excellent account</b> of what was discussed or decided. There is information on how they have responded to feedback (from either their supervisor or the formative task) and may include action plans or SMART/targets.
Good (or very good) quality 62, 65, 68%		Entries made in section 2 of the reflective log are regular, detailing dates, hours worked, and activities undertaken in the workplace, some notable incidents are mentioned with <b>some evidence of learning</b> . There is a <b>good account</b> of the experience that is informative and has <b>some evidence of reflection</b> .	The work demonstrates <b>good reflection</b> in relation to the criteria for <b>at least 5 of the transferrable skills</b> to be developed, relating to: Personal Development, Personal Motivation, Organisation & Time Management, Teamwork, Verbal Communication, Written Communication, Research & Analytical Skills, Numeracy and Information Technology. The work is <b>concise</b> , and it is <b>sometimes supported by credible academic sources but with occasional errors</b> in their application and referencing using an appropriate referencing system. There is evidence of reflection and links are made personal, academic, or professional development.	The student has attended a supervisory meeting and has provided a <b>very good account</b> of what was discussed or decided. Information on their response to feedback (from either their supervisor or the formative task), any actions plans or SMART/targets arising may be incomplete.

## EXTRACT FROM MARKING RUBRIC ((Page 2 of 2)

### Getting students involved: Increasing engagement with assessment in an Advantage module

<p>Acceptable (or good) 52, 55, 58%</p>	<p>Has undertaken <b>between 50 and 79 hours</b> of professional or work experience</p>	<p>Entries made in section 2 of the reflective log are regular, detailing dates, hours worked, and activities undertaken in the workplace. The account of the experience is <b>mostly descriptive</b> but sufficiently informative, and <b>evidence of learning or reflection may be incomplete.</b></p>	<p>The work demonstrates an <b>acceptable</b> reflection in relation to the criteria for <b>at least 5 of the transferrable skills</b> to be developed, relating to: Personal Development, Personal Motivation, Organisation &amp; Time Management, Teamwork, Verbal Communication, Written Communication, Research &amp; Analytical Skills, Numeracy and Information Technology. It is reasonably written and readable but often lacking in detail; the application of credible academic sources is missing or infrequent and/or errors in the use of an appropriate referencing. There is <b>some</b> evidence of reflection and links are <b>sometimes</b> made to personal, academic, or professional development.</p>	<p>The student has attended a meeting and provided an <b>acceptable summary</b> of what was discussed /or decided but there are <b>some key omissions</b> in the account including their response feedback (from their supervisor or the formative task), any actions plans or SMART/targets raised.</p>
<p>Adequate / Acceptable 42, 45, 48%</p>	<p>Has undertaken <b>between 26 and 49 hours</b> of professional or work experience</p>	<p>Entries made in section 2 of the reflective log are regular, but <b>may miss out key details</b> such as dates, hours worked, or notable activities undertaken in the workplace. The account of the experience is <b>descriptive</b>, giving a brief overview of the activities undertaken but there is <b>limited evidence of learning or reflection.</b></p>	<p>The work demonstrates <b>adequate</b> reflection in relation to the criteria for <b>4 or less of the transferrable skills</b> to be developed, relating to: Personal Development, Personal Motivation, Organisation &amp; Time Management, Teamwork, Verbal Communication, Written Communication, Research &amp; Analytical Skills, Numeracy and Information Technology. It is <b>readable</b> but <b>often difficult to follow</b> ideas, the narrative lacks detail and the application of credible academic sources is either missing or clumsy, with frequent errors in the use of an appropriate referencing system. There is <b>limited</b> reflection and links are <b>rarely</b> made to personal, academic, or professional development.</p>	<p>The student has attended a meeting but has only provided a <b>brief summary</b> of what was discussed/or decided. Key details are missing or the information on their response to feedback (from either their supervisor or the formative task), any actions plans or SMART/targets arising may be <b>missing or incomplete.</b></p>
<p>Referral (or fail) 39.5% or less 35% 30% 20% 10% 0%</p>	<p>Has undertaken 25 hours or less of professional or work experience</p>	<p>Entries made in section 2 of the reflective log may not be regular, may be <b>vague with little detail</b> and <b>no evidence of learning or reflection.</b></p>	<p>The work demonstrates <b>minimal reflection</b> in relation to the criteria for <b>4 or less of the transferrable skills</b> to be developed, relating to: Personal Development, Personal Motivation, Organisation &amp; Time Management, Teamwork, Verbal Communication, Written Communication, Research &amp; Analytical Skills, Numeracy and Information Technology. It is <b>poorly written</b>, information is <b>missing/incomplete</b>. Narrative is <b>difficult to follow</b> and contains <b>no real structure or organisation</b>. <b>No credible academic sources</b> have been applied or attempts made to use an appropriate referencing. Demonstration of the transferable skills and how they relate to student's own personal, academic, or professional development is inadequate.</p>	<p>There is <b>no evidence</b> of the student having arranged or attended a supervisory meeting OR there is some evidence of having arranged or attended a meeting but the <b>summary provided is unreadable and lacks reflection</b> of how they have responded to feedback (either from their supervisor or the formative task) and have not included any information on action plans or SMART/targets raised.</p>