

Assessment Case Study

A successful makeover! Improving students' experience of assessment in a fashion module

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Course: BA (Hons) International Fashion Management and Marketing (LONU035) **Module:** 220LON Personal Branding and Promotion in International Fashion



AN EXAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT THAT INVOLVES...

- Ongoing feedback
- Feed forward feedback
- Peer assessment/feedback

AN EXAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT THAT IS...

- Authentic
- Inclusive
- Formative
- Developing assessment literacy

AIMS

In response to feedback from students, the lecturer wanted to:

- Make the rationale for assessments clearer to those on the module, and to clarify what was expected of students. This would help to improve their **assessment literacy**.
- Enhance the assessment in terms of its **authenticity**, whilst making it more **inclusive** to the diverse international cohort of students which the module attracts.
- Support students to provide **peer to peer feedback**. Although a valuable part of the module's formative assessment, not all students felt comfortable sharing real-time feedback in class, and the benefits of giving and receiving constructive feedback were not always obvious to students.
- Enable students to self-evaluate themselves in all their modules (not only 220) by the end of the term, developing a **feed-forward approach**.

ACTIONS

Previously, students had been asked to produce a blog post as part of their assessment. Realising that this was no longer an essential skill for working in the fashion industry, the lecturer modified the assessment brief to give students the **option to choose** between writing a blog post, a self-reflection, or an article.

Similarly, the structure of the **2 minute pitch** became very flexible, according to the fashion market needs. It could

or pre-recorded; it could be 2 minutes with the students talking non-stop in front of a camera or a short movie about professional and personal skills.

The **assessment brief** was changed so that the pitch became a learning/professional opportunity rather than a compulsory aspect. These more authentic and inclusive approaches meant that students could decide which formats to engage with, according to their own interests, culture and future career plans.

To improve **clarity around the rationale** and expectations for the assessment, the lecturer introduced interactive presentations or videos explaining what needs to be submitted, why each assessment is authentic and inclusive, and how to achieve module expectations and deadlines.

To support students in giving **constructive feedback**, a session focusing on this skill was moved forward from Week 5 to Week 2, so students can engage with this earlier in the module. In addition, activities in which students make a weekly formative submission and receive peer feedback were redesigned to be done online rather than face to face.

To support students' self-evaluation, a **mini rubric** was created. This comprised questions relating to criteria from the "official" rubric to help the students unpack these criteria in a meaningful way. The prompt questions are designed to help students reflect on their achievements so far and identify how to improve for the summative submission. The mini rubric also includes specific practical steps which students could add to their own **personal development plans**. An example extract appears below:

Official rubric criterion: *Knowledge and Understanding:* Use of relevant, credible fashion and business information gathered from a range of sources (models, concepts, theories, data etc.)

"Mini rubric" Questions: Are you researching from credible fashion and business sources to create a dynamic framework when building your personal and professional brand?

Where are the data coming from? Google, Wikipedia, YouTube, Instagram, friends? Or from textbooks, academic articles, reliable fashion websites, Menti, Statista....?

Personal development plan

Do you know how to use Locate (*library search tool*)?

Do you have any research skills you need to develop further?

Do you feel that your English level needs improvement?

Assessment Case Study (continued)

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IMPACT

The **standard of students' work** (e.g. blog posts) improved as a result of the changes implemented. Moving the peer feedback exercises to an **online format** proved beneficial when teaching had to move to a remote context due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

This approach also gave more reserved students the **time and confidence** to express themselves constructively, reinforcing the core idea within the cohort that diversity is a strength.

By the end of term the students were able to apply the **feed-forward** approach to all modules, as was confirmed by the UG course director.

SUSTAINABLE, SCALEABLE OR TRANSFERABLE?

The approach to assessment in this module was shared with course team colleagues, which prompted a **mapping exercise** to get a better sense of the student journey. This enabled colleagues to identify the employability skills which students develop in each module as they progress through the course.

For 220LON, a slide is shared at each session reminding students of the **employability skills** which they are developing, aligned to the learning outcomes. This approach can be replicated in other modules.

The course team have embraced the idea of **benchmarking** students each term to see how their academic and employability skills are developing in the different modules. This will enable an action plan to be created for the following term focusing on contents and assessments.



Image: Sharon McCutcheon, unsplash.com

The **mini rubric approach** is also easy to apply to different modules and also to connect them together with the course learning outcomes, helping the students to create self-evaluation skills of their entire journey.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Following the introduction of these changes, the **MEQ result** increased from 80% to 97%. Students said:

- “The **assessment is detailed** thanks to the weekly short briefs and clear, I loved the fact that we were able to receive feedback in the beginning of the year”
- “The assessment is very well explained and straightforward. Also **fun and artistic** compared to other assignments. The module helped me to understand my weaknesses, strengths etc. also how to motivate myself and make a thorough plan to develop and achieve skills / activities etc in future”
- “The module and the feedback approach helped me with getting to know what I have accomplished so far and **how to improve** more”
- “Posting assignments for everyone to see so we can **learn from watching other**. Very good structure because we can get feedback along the course and not stress at the end.”

MESSAGE TO PEERS

The lecturer's top tips are as follows: ‘**Listen to your students**: the more they are involved, the more they become committed. Ask “What would you like to improve to make your module relevant for their personal and professional life? Why? How?”. Then verify their input with what the market needs in your field.’

She adds: ‘Strong **relationships with colleagues** are crucial. Support each other, trust each other, and embrace diversity as a strength. In our Fashion department in Coventry London we have all different personalities and background, but this is what make us special: we work as a team, using each others' talents.’

EXTRACT FROM ASSESSMENT BRIEF

The next page includes an extract from the assessment brief and associated criteria.

EXTRACT FROM ASSESSMENT BRIEF

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Assignment Number and Weighting	Coursework 100%	Anonymous marking	No		
Submission Date and Time	See AULA submission link	Expected return of feedback and marked work	14 working days from the deadline		
Assessment is made up of multiple submissions	Yes		Item Title	Weighting	Item Due Date and 17:00:00
			Blog Post, Magazine Article or Reflective Reports - student choice (5 X 400 words)	25%	See AULA submission link
			Personal Development Plan	25%	See AULA submission link
			Professional Profile (minimum 2 digital platforms where you have to create buzz and interactions)	25%	See AULA submission link
			2 minutes Prerecorded Pitch (It is essential to see for at least 1 minute the students face talking live to the camera)	25%	To be prerecorder and submitted online in week 11 on AULA
Submission Procedure	Electronically via AULA(Turnitin) ONLY	Word Count	4000		
Assignment Title	Portfolio consisting of: 5x400 words reports following student choice, Pitch, PDP and Professional Profiles.				
Assessment Learning Outcomes	<p>This assignment is designed to assess learning outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critically evaluate the importance of personal image within the global fashion industries and utilise current knowledge relevant to personal branding. 2. Analyse and synthesise research and evidence of communication methodologies using a range of online and offline, primary and secondary sources; 				

Further Learning Outcomes are then listed, and assessment guidance plus marking rubric provided.