

Breakout session on “Alternatives to Exams”

Thursday 18th June 2020

Report by Alison Voice, University of Leeds.

Notes from the Alternative Assessments:

- There is a wide range of alternative assessments (open-book, open-ended questions, presentation in format other than written script (e.g. PowerPoint, video, mini lecture, poster) group work, peer assessment....
- We need to weigh up what Learning Outcomes we want to assess, and pick most relevant assessment style (and question style) for each.
- Need to minimise ‘cheating’ (maybe by novel question that can’t be googled), or setting as a group assignment to actively encourage collaboration.
- We discussed the time constraints of exams, but other than assessing speed of recall/thinking, time constraint was more about practicalities for uni exam halls and making sure students with specific needs were accommodated. On the other hand a long time (say a week) possibly just extends time for collusion or even adds pressure (anxiety) for students who want to ‘be perfect’ and don’t know when to stop.
- A possible benefit of the current situation is that everyone is willing/needing to change how we teach and assess, and this is very timely for the new IOP accreditation criteria. We should thus take advantage of this unique moment in time/enthusiasm, and use it as leverage to make more lasting changes to physics teaching and assessment.

As such, would a Physics –LTHE session on the new IOP Accreditation (from Robyn and Ross) be timely, even if all details are not finalised yet?