

Breakout session on “Inclusivity in assessment design”

Thursday 18th June 2020

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The discussion began by defining our terms.

- Assessment design – this refers specifically to remote types of assessment necessitated by the COVID-19 crisis;
- Inclusivity – this refers to groups that might be disadvantaged by remote or alternative assessment designs, in this case (a) disabled students and (b) disadvantaged students e.g. those regarded as “data-poor”, lacking suitable electronic devices or lacking suitable quiet working spaces (perhaps due to caring responsibilities).

Data-poor students

- 1) Many departments are considering replacing parts of their labs with computing activities or other digital resources. We need to ensure that students will have access to these new resources.
- 2) Labs are considering replacing paper lab books with electronic note taking systems – Microsoft OneNote seems popular because many universities will have it on site licence. Again, we need to ensure that students have access to suitable devices for accessing this.
- 3) Similar issues exist with any on-line assessment – it seems unlikely communal computer rooms will be operating so we need to ensure students have suitable equipment.
- 4) It was suggested that we should survey our students on entry to establish exactly what electronic devices / computers they have available. Loan devices could be made available for those who need them, probably on a termly basis to avoid excessive needs for cleaning.

Students with disabilities

- 1) It was pointed out that many “alternative” assessments involve computer screens, which can be a problem for students with impaired vision.
- 2) Additionally, many such assessments also involve a lot of typing, which can be an issue for students with mobility issues.
- 3) We need to be careful in designing our alternative assessments that we have further alternatives for cases such as the above.
- 4) It was further pointed out that a student might claim a phobia to technology. This would need to be considered in the light of existing disability legislation.