Title: **Changing assessments – what can programme based assessment achieve for staff and students?**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Identify the benefits/issues of programme based assessment.
- Refer to an increasing body of evidence relating to the choices and consequences of programme based assessment.

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

Every HE course/programme confronts the issue of designing an effective, efficient, inclusive and sustainable assessment strategy to deliver key course/programme outcomes. One resolution is to focus on programme -level rather than module/unit-level assessment. This paper reviews what we have learned from the PASS (Programme Assessment Strategies) project which is exploring this approach.

Assessment is both a major driver to student learning and significant source of student satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Currently, programme leaders cannot access suitable evidence-based guidance and exemplars/examples to develop and implement effective cross-programme or programme-based assessment strategies. This project aims to develop both the appropriate evidence base and framework across a range of major subject disciplines.

Building on the extensive experience within partner institutions (including 2 assessment-focused CETLs: ASKE and AfL and four HEIs of different types and sizes – Bradford, Leeds Metropolitan, Exeter and Plymouth), PASS will identify essential principles of programme-based assessment and use these to implement and test the effectiveness of programme assessment strategies. By the time of the SEDA conference, the session will be able to reflect on interim finding and outcomes in the following areas:

- guidance and case studies on programme assessment across a range of subject disciplines; including a major literature review alongside the development of a conceptual framework and practical case studies;

- a workshop format which programme teams can use to review/revise their assessment strategies. This format will be open to the sector for formal review in July 2010;

- development of a methodology to evaluate the impact of programme assessment strategies;

- evidence of impact of both the development and application of programme assessment strategies on staff and student behaviour.

The session summarises progress made and provides opportunity for delegates to discuss what we mean by programme-based assessments and how/whether they might transform the student and staff experience.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

25 mins presentation to introduce the project

45 mins group discussions to consider (one/two per group depending on numbers):

- What is programme-based/level assessment?
    - o What features would you expect to find in a course which headlines programme assessment?
    - o How does it differ from the modular structure of degrees and/or the linear degree structure?

- How does programme assessment relate to disciplines/subject-specific knowledge etc?
    - o To what extent are different assessment cultures within programmes simply a reflection of tradition and disciplinary differences?

- What are the implications of programme assessment for QA/QE procedures and processes?

- Does your assessment strategy explain the following to staff, students and external agencies**:**
    - o How does the course/programme assess the main outcomes?
    - o How are assessment and teaching linked?
    - o How does assessment support 'high-quality learning' *and* develop it over the course?

25 mins open discussion to consider responses and how they relate to the findings of the project so far.

References

References associated with the project:

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