Title: **Inclusive assessment. Where shall we start?**

Presenter: **Ruth Payne**
University of Leeds

Session Learning Outcomes

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

Participants will learn about output from a Teaching Enhancement Project run in 2018 in the Leeds Institute for Teaching Excellence and about work currently undertaken at Leeds by the Inclusive Learning and Teaching Development group.

Participants will gain a clear overview of a range of issues that affect inclusive assessment and will be asked in particular to reflect on the impact of the use of reactive 'reasonable adjustments' as outlined in the 2010 Equality Act in learning and teaching.

Through discussion, the group will develop a broad framework for creating inclusive assessment environments for all students and consider an adoptable series of steps that lead towards this goal.

By the end of the session delegates will have a clear way into thinking about inclusivity in assessment, understanding its role in learning, and reflecting on the fundamental purposes of assessment across different disciplines.

Session Outline

The discussion will introduce the experiences of a profoundly disabled student as motivation for questioning current approaches to assessment at the University of Leeds.

To begin, delegates will be asked to give critical consideration to their own experience of setting different assessment tasks and of their rationale for adopting the assessment approaches they currently use.

The presenter will introduce ideas from Universal Design in Learning and will raise some of the problems that arise from the current use of Reasonable Adjustments as defined in the 2010 Equality Act.

This part of the exploration will lead naturally to mention of the 2017 Government White Paper, the crucial matter of Programme Learning Outcomes and the role of Competence Standards.

This will lead into discussion of new *Baseline Standards for Inclusive Learning and Teaching* at the University of Leeds. There will also be a brief explanation of new *Leeds Expectations in Assessment and Feedback* that includes an assessment mapping exercise that is being rolled out across the University.

The topic will then be developed by the presenter to raise other issues that need to be considered alongside discussions about inclusivity and will lead to more practical suggestions about how to approach assessment reform in a way that is not onerous for teaching staff or for our students.

For example, the discussion will include ideas about the impact on assessment of modular approaches to teaching, as well as ideas about the purpose and role of assessment in different disciplines.

The session will end on ideas relating to programme-level assessment and the aim of creating truly inclusive and innovative assessment tasks that ultimately lead to a reduction in assessment and marking workload for students and colleagues alike.
The overall session covers a broad range of topics, whilst seeking to support colleagues with ways to begin to make effective changes.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

- Introduction 7-10 mins
- Participant reflection and brief discussion 7-10 mins
- Further presentation of issues 10 mins
- Possible ways forward (discussion) 15 mins

I plan to introduce a series of major factors that affect inclusive assessment one at a time. I will raise issues in a workable order that guides delegates through a logical and adoptable approach that outlines the various issues for consideration in relation both to inclusive assessment and to assessment more generally.

Each major issue will be followed by a facilitated discussion, so delegates can frequently contribute their understanding and practice to the topics under discussion. There will then be opportunity for a plenary discussion about how best to approach new assessment tasks that incorporate current understanding of good inclusive practice.

Indicative questions might be:

1. What do you understand to be 'reasonable adjustments' in your institution?
2. Does your institution offer guidance on the amount of assessment for each module?
3. How are learning outcomes mapped to assessed tasks in your institution?

It is hoped that through discussion, new ideas and practice will be shared and that these can contribute to a richer approach for future use.

References

BALL, S., BEW, C., BLOXHAM, S., BROWN, S., KLEIMAN, P., MAY, H., MCDOWELL, L., MORRIS, E., ORR, S., PAYNE, E., PRICE, M., RUST, C., SMITH, B. & WATERFIELD, J. 2012. A marked improvement: transforming assessment in higher education. York.

BLOXHAM, S. & BOYD, P. 2007. *Developing Effective Assessment in Higher Education,* Maidenhead, Open University Press.

BOUD, D. 2010. Assessment 2020. Seven propositions for assessment reform in Higher Education. Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION 2017. Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excellence. London: Department for Education.

FUNG, D. 2017. *A Connected Curriculum for Higher Education,* London, UCL Press.

HARLAND, T., MCLEAN, A., WASS, R., MILLER, E. & SIM, K. N. 2015. An assessment arms race and its fallout: high-stakes grading and the case for slow scholarship. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education,* 40**,** 528-541.

PRICE, M., RUST, C., O'DONOVAN, B. & HANDLEY, K. 2012. *Assessment Literacy: the foundation for improving student learning,* Oxford, OCSLD.

TOMAS, C. & JESSOP, T. 2018. Struggling and juggling: a comparison of student assessment loads across research and teaching-intensive universities. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education***,** 1-10.

WATERFIELD, J. & WEST, B. 2002. SENDA compliance in higher education: An audit and guidance tool for accessible practice within the framework of teaching and learning. Plymouth: University of Plymouth (South West Academic Network for Disability Support, SWANDS project.