Nottingham Trent University
Centre for Academic Development & Quality

DIY Toolkit for

Alternative & Inclusive Assessment Practice

Toolkit contents

2009

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With acknowledgement to Jane McNeil for her contributions, particularly in section 8

1 Introduction

Disability Equality Duty

The Disability Equality Duty (DDA 2005) requires the University to anticipatorily deliver equality of outcomes for disabled people through the services it offers, including all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment. It does this through both:

- an institutional Disability Equality Scheme (DES), [now a Single Equality Scheme – SES] which lasts for three years (with a review on progress annually) that sets out the priorities for this period; &
- equality impact assessment of policies and procedures which aims to identify and address where possible any adverse effects on potentially disadvantaged groups.

Alternative & inclusive assessment practices at NTU

Like many institutions we are struggling with a number of issues related to the assessment process, student engagement with assessment, fairness, academic standards and rigour and, in particular, the inclusion of disabled students within the assessment process. With regard to this latter group, from an inclusive perspective we need to consider **differences** between all students and consider how we can enable them to demonstrate their abilities equitably through offering a choice of assessment media.

Inclusive assessment design enables all students to demonstrate their learning

The differences to consider under the DDA include impairment types: visual, cognitive, speech, physical, hearing, medical and mental health difficulties. However, in the spirit of inclusion, we should extend this to include social and cultural differences, as well as, arguably, learning styles. It should be noted that it is not within the scope of this Toolkit to discuss learning styles and there already exists a significant body of literature on the subject.

The University's DES asked us to 're-examine assessment processes to improve accessibility and inclusivity for disabled learners' (2006: learning & teaching action point 5.4). The aim of this Toolkit is to support the re-examination process.

The development of the Toolkit has been informed by interviews with the Learning & Teaching Co-ordinators at NTU. These interviews explored current assessment practices in each School, existing approaches to inclusion and constraints on assessment (such as PSRB requirements).

About the Toolkit

The Toolkit is intended to assist programme teams in identifying how they can further improve access for, and inclusion of, disabled students when devising assessments.

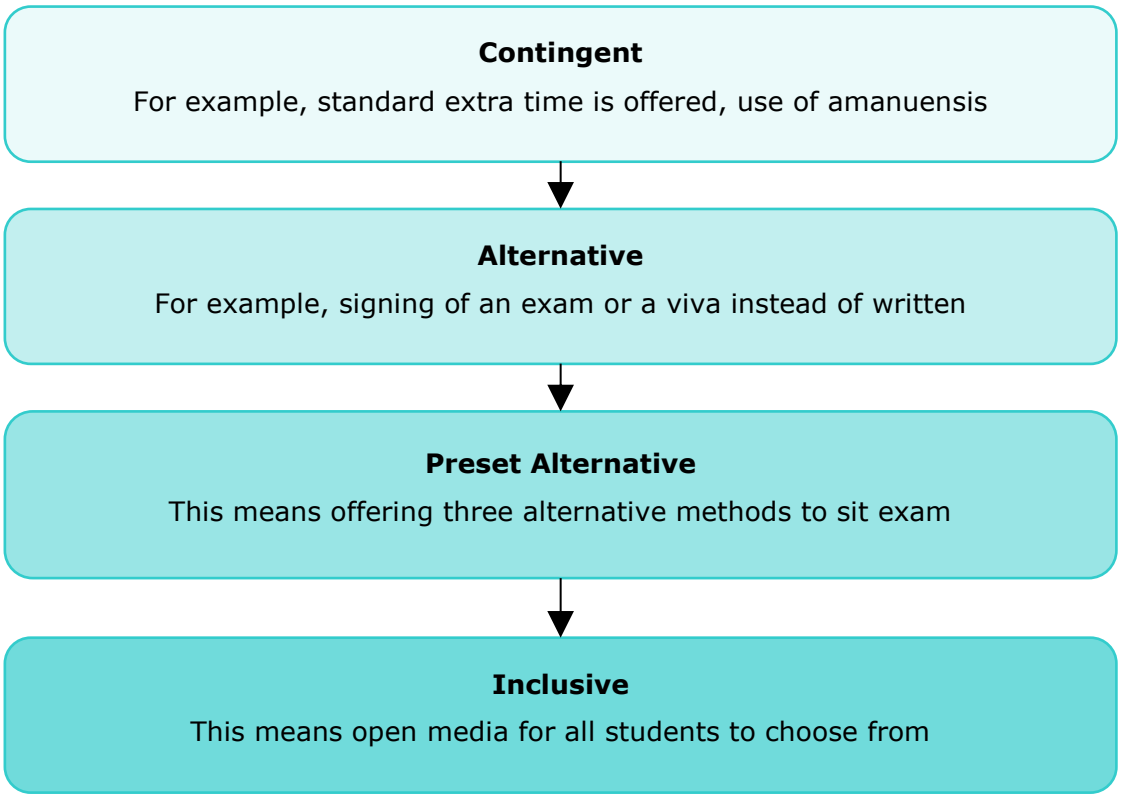
It is important to note that inclusion is a process of development—not a static state. The idea behind this toolkit is to guide you through this process; however, the solution will be your own. Given that many programmes already have some very effective practice, the starting point for the process is reflection on your existing provision. Following this, teams might consider alternative or adapted provision, where assessments could be made more accessible or inclusive. The solution may involve short, medium and long term aims.

The Toolkit offers a series of prompts to aid this process. It is probably most useful when considered in discussion by the whole programme or subject team, at the point where the team wishes to review its assessment strategy, re-specify provision, or develop a new programme.

2 Approach

Taxonomy of Inclusive Assessment (TIA model)
(Ward, C. 2008)

Currently there are four approaches to assessment that potentially accommodate disabled students/students with specific learning difficulties.



Contingent assessment is where 'reasonable adjustments' are made on a by-case basis, in an attempt to 'level the playing field' between disabled and non-disabled students. This approach is, in part, a response to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Part IV (DDA), as amended by the 'Special Educational Needs and Disability Act' 2001 (SENDA). This Act states that disabled students 'must not be treated less favourably than others for a reason related to their disability' and that 'reasonable adjustments' must be provided to enable equality of opportunity. Less favourable treatment can be justified by the need to maintain academic standards and equity for a particular mode of assessment (or part of an assessment), where the reasons are still valid after reasonable adjustments have been made.

Contingent assessment procedures have found widespread acceptance in the HE sector. However, there are arguments against it. On one hand, it has been argued that the extensive use of reasonable adjustments gives disabled students an unfair advantage. On the other, there is little evidence that the playing field is actually levelled by offering reasonable adjustments. Most importantly, although some disabled students will always need and be entitled (under SENDA 2001) to some reasonable adjustments, the central philosophy of the DDA 2005 is *equality of opportunity*, not compensation.

Alternative assessment is a progression from contingent in that the students' disability is accommodated by offering individuals the opportunity to undertake their assessment by a method which is more suitable to them. For example, if a student with

a cognitive impairment is shown, by reason of their disability, to be disadvantaged in exams (due to the time it takes them to process, structure and write their assignments), then they might be offered an equivalent coursework assessment. Another example is where an exam paper uses graphics, making it difficult for a blind student to access. In this case an alternative paper, designed specifically for this student, could be used.

There are problems with this approach. It is still singling out the disabled student for special consideration and represents another attempt to 'level the playing field'. Additionally, it may be difficult to establish whether the alternative is indeed equivalent to the assessment the other students are taking.

Preset alternative is arguably a more equitable, fair and student-centred approach. It offers alternative assessments for all students, from a limited selection. This not only takes into account students with specific impairments, but also may accommodate all students' preferred learning styles. Alternatives offered might be choice of the medium of expression (visual, multimedia or written), or of genre (three types of writing).

It is argued that this approach offers all students a better opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of their subject. Additionally, because the assignment alternatives are designed in advance by the lecturer, each method can be considered and validated for equity and fairness. This should increase confidence that all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate intended learning outcomes (ILOs).

Inclusive assessment is at the other end of the continuum from contingent assessment and is student-led to a greater degree than the 'alternatives' approaches. Students negotiate with the module leader a suitable method of assessment which will enable them to demonstrate the ILOs to their best advantage. This approach is akin to a learning contract and should be agreed at the outset of the module. It is considered to be the most genuinely inclusive approach. However, a central concern is how far towards student-led assessment it is appropriate to move, particularly given the need to offer standard qualifications.

Benefits and problems of the inclusive assessment approach

It may be useful to pause here to review the benefits of inclusive assessment for students. The underpinning value is one of social justice, in terms of offering each individual student the best possible chance of demonstrating their knowledge, understanding and skills to the appropriate level.

The **benefits** that have been argued for an inclusive approach to assessment are that it:

- places a student with a disability on an equal footing with their peers, without giving them any additional, unfair advantage;
- can accommodate different learning styles and acknowledges the diversity of student participation, without lowering standards;
- can increase motivation and commitment to study, as it helps students better perceive the relationship between what they study and what they are expected to demonstrate (this may, in turn, lead to a concomitant improvement of student satisfaction with their programme);
- can aid students in developing effective study strategies, by creating explicit, individual learning goals and giving them some influence over the nature, weighting and timing of assessment tasks;
- utilises a variety of assessment tasks;
- affords further opportunities for programme teams to consider outcomes-based learning, teaching and assessment for their diverse range of students.

(Waterfield and West 2008; Monash University 2007; Open University 2006)

There are, however, issues associated with the inclusive assessment approach. One is students' preparedness and how much support they would need to enable them to make appropriate assessment choices. The implications of a poor choice should also be considered. Another issue is that of balance: for example, would it be appropriate for a student to always select the same assessment method or medium? This might impact adversely on the student's development, on their achievement of programme outcomes and on their subsequent employability. A further consideration is ensuring the validity and equity of individually-negotiated assignments.

Given these issues, it might be tempting to continue to approach assessment on a by-case basis. In many respects, however, such an approach, which sits almost entirely within the medical model of disability, is not tenable.

Social and medical models of disability

Inclusive assessment should be developed, particularly where disabled students are concerned, in the spirit of the social model of disability.

The 'social model' identifies any 'problems' associated with disabled people as being located within society, or in our case, within the institution. The problems, therefore, are created by the values, attitudes and physical and learning environment. It follows that it is these which need to change to allow disabled students to participate equally with their impairments.

Conversely, the 'medical model' of disability locates 'problems' with individual students. It suggests that *they* should change or be cured or have special arrangements to fit in with existing conditions, in this case, assessment provision.

The social model is not only morally just, it is also more achievable and realistic. Little can be done to cure or change most impairments, but systems can be changed to accommodate people with impairments within our institution and society.

3 Review of current assessment methods

Most programme or subject teams keep a record of the assessment methods used across their provision and update this regularly. It is suggested that this record is used as a starting point. An exemplar record is appended in Appendix 2.

Table 3 characterises the assessment types currently used in NTU, for comparative purposes. It is based on data from a survey of Learning and Teaching Co-ordinators, conducted in January 2008.

Suggested activity

3.1 If necessary, update the record of assessment methods used across the programme. For the next step in the Toolkit, specificity in identifying methods and media will be needed. Table 3 might be useful here.

Table 3: Assessment methods in use at NTU, 2008

Method	Characteristic medium					
	Written	Oral	Visual	Practical	Timed	Other[1]
Class test	√				√	
Continuous						√
Computer-assisted					Often	√
Critique (paper)	√					
Case study	√					
CV (online)	Often					√
Directed learning						√
Dissertation/Thesis	√					
Examination	√				√	
Essay	√					
Exhibition/performance			√			
Feature	√	√	√			
Field or laboratory work				√		
Group work						√
Interview techniques		√				
IT assignment						√
Log/diary/journal	√					
Negotiation exercise	√	√				
Oral presentation/ Debate/ Moot		√				

[1] 'Other' could include assessment that is predominantly aural, by video/film, computer, or any medium not expressly listed within the table.

Oral / Viva voce		√				
Peer						√
Project	√	√	√	√		
Poster presentation			√			
Portfolio	√		√			
Practical test				√	√	
Proposal/plan/ outline	√					
Placement report	√			√		
Report/review	√	√	√			
Research exercise/ literature review/ annotated bibliography	√			√		
Self						√
Class participation		√		√		
Seminar or conference paper	√	√				
Simulation/game	√			√		
Teaching/professional practice	√	√	√	√		
Translation/interpreting	√	√				

4 Identifying potentially discriminatory practice

Clearly, one of the purposes of a summative assessment task is to discriminate *appropriately* between students who can evidence or demonstrate learning outcomes; that is, the extent to which a student has achieved the required standard. However, some assessment methods may be *inappropriately* discriminatory, in that they inadvertently inhibit students from demonstrating learning outcomes that they have, in fact, achieved.

Suggested activity:

The following prompt questions should be considered as part of a team review of assessment, preferably in discussion:

4.1 Are you aware of any assessments that you currently use that may be inappropriately discriminative to individual students/groups of students?

a. This judgement might be based on your experience, or on feedback from students or peers. You might consider impairments (listed in the Introduction, above), learning styles and other differences between students.

b. A useful resource for this is: Strategies for Creating Inclusive Programmes of Study (scips.worc.ac.uk). The authors have mapped Subject Benchmark Statements with the problems that disabled students may experience in demonstrating ILOs. (Use the Browse function to find your discipline.)

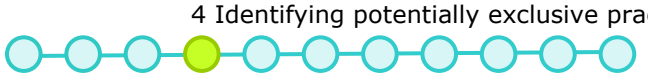
4.2 If you are aware of potential problems, why are some students disadvantaged by this assessment style?

Table 4.1-2 Suggested output (summary table)

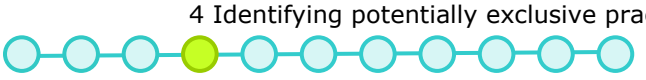
Module	Assessment	Potential problem	Comments

Table 4.3 Examples from experience

Subject	Assessment	Potential problem	Comments
Art & Design	Final year dissertation of approx 10,000 words	Format may present a problem for students with dyslexia, blind students, students with mental health and memory problems and even some physically disabled students	Students with dyslexia, visual impairment or some mental health/memory problems may experience difficulty working with long documents. The problems here are organizing, processing and synthesizing large amounts of information (structured documents may provide a solution)
Biomedical science	Assessments in the field	Location may be problematic for students with mobility impairments (wheelchair users in particular), blind/visually impaired students, cognitively impaired students	Wheelchair users/students mobility difficulties may be unable to access some or all areas of necessary field trip environments; visually impaired students/ cognitively impaired students may be disadvantaged by assistive technologies not being available on site



Broadcast journalism	Research, film and produce a TV or radio broadcast report	Affects students with mobility impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments	A student with a mobility impairment, or who is a wheelchair user, could have difficulties in on-location filming and equipment. Student with a visual impairment will not be able to see pictures in order to film and edit them. Students who are hearing impaired may experience issues with interviewing people
Computing	Games Technology written exam with many graphics	Blind/visually impaired students unable to see graphics on exam paper and their specialist software is unable to read and interpret it	Where a blind person's guide/helper will read exam papers to them, it may also be necessary to take into account their understanding of the subject
Horticulture	Recall, oral pronunciation and written spelling of Latin names of plants	Students with specific learning difficulties, mental health difficulties, visual or hearing impairment may all struggle with aspects of this assessment	Students with specific learning difficulties may be unable to spell the names, even though they know them. Students with different types of mental health impairment may be unable to recall Latin names (memory issues) or pronounce them (anxiety etc). Students with visual impairments cannot see the complicated spelling to learn them and students with hearing problems could not hear the words to phonetically chunk the names in order to learn them or pronounce them properly
Law	3 hour, unseen exam with 4 essay questions to answer	Students with dyslexia, some students with mental health problems, students with physical/dexterity issues, students with visual impairments and students with some medical conditions may struggle with this assessment	Dyslexic students may not be able to process, organize and write material quickly, and so an unseen exam can inhibit their performance. People with various mental health issues (e.g. anxiety, ADHD) may also have difficulties. Visually impaired students may need a person to read the paper and write answers for them, or to utilise software, both of which take much longer. Students with physical/dexterity issues may be disadvantaged, because additional time awarded can mean writing for significantly extended periods. Students with some medical conditions may also need to take frequent breaks or medication



5 Considering alternatives

Having identified potential problems, the next step is to consider viable alternatives. This is where case studies may prove useful, and several have been supplied in Appendix 3.

Suggested activity

Consider the following questions and identify possible alternatives for the problematic assessments from step 4. These might be alternative assessment methods, or different media of expression (again, examples are cited in Appendix 3). At this stage it can be helpful to just identify options; these can be evaluated later.

5.1 Is there an alternative format(s) in which the ILOs could be assessed?

a. If yes, what and how?

b. If no, is the potential problem so *significantly* disadvantageous to a particular group of students, that an entirely alternative approach to assessment should be considered?

5.2 Is there a weighting imbalance across the whole programme or subject in favour of one form of assessment methodology? (In considering this, the possible combinations of module options should be taken into account.)

a. If there is, what alternatives/options could be used to redress this imbalance?

b. Solutions here might be to adopt a wider range of assessment formats, or to consider if the way ILOs are written is unduly constraining the feasible media for assessment.

Table 5: Suggested output (summary table)

Module	Current method	Alternative methods?	Same method, alternative media?	Comments

6 Constraints and barriers

Clearly, there are constraints on developing and offering pre-set alternatives, or open choice of media. Resourcing is one. The tables below may be useful in considering legitimate constraints and other barriers. In both cases, there may be options for compromise.

In consideration of the social model of disability (discussed briefly in the Introduction), cultural and institutional constraints are barriers that should be challenged. It is recognised that some such constraints may currently be beyond the influence of a programme team. However, the direction taken should be one of changing our assessment practices to accommodate students with different types of impairments, rather than, requiring all students to fit in with existing practice.

Suggested activity

6.1 Consider potential constraints, and review the options in step 5 in the light of these. Where possible, identify compromise positions or workarounds.

Table 6 Constraints, barriers and possible workarounds

Constraint	Issue	Concern
A Professional Standards Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements	PSRBs define standards and skills which must be achieved. PSRBs may also assert preferences or requirements for student assessment.	What if a student is unable to demonstrate some or all of the PSRB standards, due to the assessment method in use, in particular, because of a disability?
Workarounds/options		
First, PSRBs, along with all public bodies, have a legal duty to not discriminate against disabled students, under the DDA 2005. PSRB standards, therefore, should be interpreted in a way that allows for flexibility when setting assessment criteria to meet ILOs. If PSRB requirements are not allowing this flexibility, it may be appropriate to request clarification from the professional body concerned. Alternatively, programme teams might try to find alternative ways for anything which appears too rigid and discriminatory. Case example: A PSRB states that students 'must have a clear voice' to undertake a journalism degree and a student has a speech impairment. This may not mean automatic exclusion and the student may still be able to undertake the programme. Voice training is usually offered on broadcast journalism programmes and this may enable the student to produce enough clarity in their voice for it to be acceptable. Alternatively, the student may be able to follow the route of print journalism, where a clear voice could not be deemed essential in the same way as for a TV/radio journalist.		

Constraint	Issue	Concern
B High numbers of	Capacity to develop, assure and operate	How much additional time might be needed to develop and mark

students in a cohort	alternatives. This connects with other resourcing issues.	assessments using different methods? Time to help students make an appropriate choice is also a factor, especially for fully open models.

Workarounds/options

There is no published guidance that has been discovered during the research for this Toolkit which makes recommendations on staff-student ratios for alternative and inclusive assessment. However, the following approaches have been used to mitigate this issue:

- Alternative methods might be evaluated by trialling them as formative assessments
- It is argued that formative peer assessment strategies can be used to reduce marking loads and develop students' ability to evaluate their work (Rust, O'Donovan, Price 2005). Time spent in developing these might therefore be a useful investment
- For larger cohorts with small module teams serious consideration might be given to sharing marking and moderation with other colleagues
- Developing alternatives for cohorts of 200-300 will require considerable time and in these cases a longer term strategy might be appropriate, introducing alternative assessment methods/media gradually
- Programme teams might also evaluate alternative methods by trialling them with smaller cohorts (for example, in the School of Social Sciences a 3rd year module of 60 students offers a choice of three written options, each taught and marked by a different colleague)
- For a longer term goal, trials of inclusive assessment could follow where alternative assessments have been thoroughly evaluated in practice.

Rapid assessment techniques for large cohorts are discussed by Biggs & Tang (2007: 234-238).

Constraint	Issue	Concern
C Disciplinary characteristics and identity	As articulated, for example, in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject benchmark statements (2002-08).These are an expression by the academic community of the characteristics and identity of programmes in the different disciplines. They also articulate generally-held expectations about standards for qualifications in each subject area and characterise graduate	The benchmarks include conceptions about subjects that impact on assessment. These equate to constraints in some cases. For example, while encouraging diversity of methods, the benchmark statement for undergraduate History also emphasises that the essay is "an essential element" of History assessment and that programmes should "give serious consideration" to requiring students to sit exams. (2007)

	subject knowledge and skills. They make stipulations and recommendations for appropriate assessment in each subject.	

Workarounds/options

The QAA acknowledges that the Disability Equality Duty must be taken into account when interpreting subject benchmark statements. Many of the benchmarks have been written in a way that would allow for the creation of inclusive assessment criteria. It is important to bear in mind that *competence standards* (see Competence Standards – The 5-step Test, 2006, http://www.sdt.ac.uk/resources/CompetenceStandardsThe5StepTest.doc) can be a justification for appropriate discrimination under SENDA 2001. However, to meet obligations under the DDA 2005, alternative and inclusive methods should be developed. To reconcile these positions, programmes teams may wish to return to benchmark statements to review the extent to which they preclude alternatives.

The QAA Code of Practice includes a section on disabled students (1999); this gives guidance on ensuring that they have an equitable learning experience to their peers.

Constraint	Issue	Concern
D Feasibility of equity of alternatives Designing alternative assessment tasks which are fair and equitable and meet the ILOs	The assessment medium or genre is not only the method of production, but is also closely related to knowledge construction. Ensuring content, construct and predictive validity across alternatives. Alignment of assessment criteria with ILOs.	How can different methods be equivalent in assessing understanding or skills and in matching assessment criteria to ILOs? Lack of knowledge about practical issues of inclusion. Unfamiliarity with designing equivalent alternative assessment methods.

Workarounds/options

These issues relate to the model of constructive alignment discussed in section 8. Tutors' experience in evaluating student work produced in different media is also a consideration.

The issue of genre and knowledge construction perhaps most frequently arises where the current assessment method is a sustained written argument. One example of a feasible alternative in this situation arose from an alternative established for an individual student. In this case, a blind Masters student experienced difficulties with the project write-up because of the added demand of working with long documents in screen reader software. An alterative method of production and submission was agreed in this case, which required the student to produce individual chapters. *Structured documents* of this type are also used informally by dyslexia specialists at NTU, to assist students in compiling written assessments, particularly at Level 3. This method might be offered as an option for all students.

(To discuss the use of structured documents, please contact Claire Ward at the Centre

for Academic Standards and Quality.)

It may be that the way that ILOs are articulated has the unintended consequence of restricting the feasible methods of assessment. In this case, programme teams may find it appropriate to revisit and refine these. If, on considering the ILOs, there appears to be little scope for change, another way of exploring the options could be to use learning contracts with one or two students with impairments. By individually negotiating the method/medium which the student will use to demonstrate the ILOs, it should be possible to discover if there are, in fact, alternatives which would make the assessment more inclusive.

Other issues of equity and alignment relate to experience and confidence in designing assessments and to knowledge about practical issues of inclusion. The references and further resources in section 9 may be of use here.

Constraint	**Issue**	**Concern**
E Difficulty of cultural change	Students and colleagues may be uncomfortable with, or unconvinced of, the approach. Module specifications will probably need to be changed. Inclusive assessment has implications for how learning outcomes are articulated.	Time and determination needed to achieve change across a programme; systemic barriers; difficulties in working with other Schools/departments
Workarounds/options		
Inclusive assessment is most usefully considered in a discussion involving the whole programme or subject team – not taken up unilaterally by module leaders. In this way, the team can decide on an approach and agree how to manage issues like students' expectations. This discussion might be most appropriately begun as part of the reflection for PSQR, or during programme approval/re-validation. Support for stages of implementing inclusive approaches may be found via: the Centre for Academic Standards and Quality, HEA Subject Centres, the Centre for Professional Learning and Development, and the School Learning and Teaching Co-ordinator.		

7 Evaluate options

Having considered constraints and workarounds, it should now be possible to evaluate the options identified for alternative assessment methods. This might result in three lists:

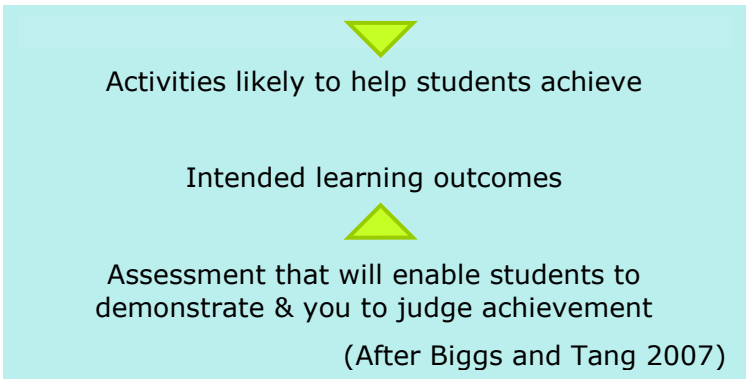
a. changes to be made to specific assessments;

b. alternative assessment options that will be offered to all students on some modules;

c. an indication of where a fully inclusive model might be used, or a plan for moving towards this.

8 Alignment check

Constructive alignment (Biggs 1999; Biggs & Tang 2007) is one expression of outcomes-based teaching, the current prevalent framework for learning and teaching in HE. In this approach, intended outcomes for the student are the starting point for programme design (as opposed to 'covering a subject'). Learning activities and assessment are planned to reflect these.



(After Biggs and Tang 2007)

This is straightforward to say, less straightforward to do. However, it can be useful to consider planned changes to assessment in terms of constructive alignment. This is one way to check or demonstrate that alternatives offered in the spirit of inclusion do not stray from the intent of the module or programme.

Biggs and Tang describe three parts to the process of assessment:

1. Setting the criteria for assessing the work.
2. Selecting the evidence that would be relevant to submit to judgement against those criteria.
3. Making a judgement about the extent to which these criteria have been met.

(2007: 187)

To offer equitable alternatives, or an open choice of assessment, only stage two should vary. The assessment criteria, derived from the intended learning outcomes, should remain the same for all students.

However, it may be that the way learning outcomes themselves are expressed is acting as a constraint on assessment methods. This constraint might be a legitimate disciplinary demand, or an unintended consequence of how some outcomes are articulated. If the latter, it may be that rewriting an outcome will allow it to remain unchanged in essence, but enable it to be demonstrated in different ways.

What if the programme team consider that the medium or genre of the task (e.g. essay) is fundamental to the learning outcomes and so to the assessment criteria? In this case, there would be less latitude to offer alternatives. However, it may be a useful exercise to revisit the learning outcomes to reflect on whether, for example, "clarity, fluency, and coherence in written expression" and "integrative high-order skills" (QAA Subject Benchmarks for History 2007) could be developed and demonstrated in ways other than an essay.

9 References

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Appendix 1: Resources

Useful online inclusive assessment resources

Accessible Assessments – Staff Guide to Inclusive Practice 2003 [online] Freewood, M., et al,. Sheffield Hallam University. Available at: www.shu.ac.uk/services/lti/accessibleassessments [Accessed Jan 2009]. A very useful website which aims to give practical support to academic staff in the design and delivery of inclusive academic assessments.

Developing an Inclusive Assessment Strategy 2006 [online]. Open University. Available at: www.open.ac.uk/inclusiveteaching/pages/inclusive-teaching/developing-an-assessment-strategy.php [Accessed Jan 2009] - The OU are well known for being advanced in providing alternative and inclusive teaching, learning and assessment for disabled students – this website gives many ideas for individual adjustments to assessments for different types of disabled students.

Staff-Student Partnership for Assessment Change and Evaluation (SPACE) 2005 [online]. University of Plymouth. Available at: www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=10494 [Accessed Jan 2009] - A HEFCE project looking at developing and promoting alternative forms of assessment as a way of facilitating a more inclusive approach to assessment.

Strategies for Creating Inclusive Programmes of Study (SCIPS) 2006. [online] Worcester University. Available at: scips.worc.ac.uk [Accessed Jan 2009]

Teachability booklet 2004 [online]. The University of Strathclyde. Available at: http://www.teachability.strath.ac.uk/teachabilityintro.html - A SHEFC project promoting the creation of an accessible curriculum for students with disabilities through a series of online publications.

Also see:

Assessment, 2008 [online]. Higher Education Academy. Available at: www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/assessment [Accessed Jan 2009] - type in 'Inclusive Assessment' for specific papers and guidance or 'Disability' for work in this area.

Inclusive Teaching, 2007 [online]. Monash University. Available at: http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/inclusivity/Assessment/3.3.html [Accessed Jan 2009] - Inclusive teaching practices and making adjustments for disabled students at a University in Australia.

LearnHigher Visual Assessment 2007 [online]. Centre for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETL), University of Brighton. Available at: http://staffcentral.brighton.ac.uk/learnhigher/assessment.htm [Accessed Jan 2009]

Towards Inclusive Assessment: Unleashing Creativity, 2006 [online]. Southampton Institute, University College. Available at: http://www.ktgoodpractice.org/resources/case_detail.php?csID=95 [Accessed Jan 2009] – A HEFCE project at Southampton Business School looking at supporting dyslexic students through innovative assessment.

Legal Resources

Disability Equality Duty 2006 [online]. Disability Rights Commission (DRC). Available at:http://www.dotheduty.org/ [Accessed Jan 2009] - All you need to know about the Disability Equality Duty; the DRC is now part of the Equality and Human Rights Commission which replaced the single rights commissions in 2007.

Competence Standards – The 5-step test, 2006 [online]. Scottish Disability Team. Available at: http://www.sdt.ac.uk/resources/CompetenceStandardsThe5StepTest.doc [Accessed Jan 2009].

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 [online]. Government website. Available at: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/DG_4001076 [Accessed Jan 2009] - DDA Part IV, Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, the Code of Practice and Disability support in higher education.

NTU support

Equal Opportunities for disabled people, 2009 [online]. Nottingham Trent University. Available at: http://www2.ntu.ac.uk/eqo/NottinghamTrentUniversityDisabilityEqualityScheme.doc [Accessed Jan 2009] - NTU's current Disability Equality Scheme & Action Plan.

Student Support Services, 2009 [online]. Nottingham Trent University. Available at: http://www.ntu.ac.uk/sss/ [Accessed Jan 2009] - Accessing advice regarding disabled students at NTU.

Appendix 2: Exemplar assessment methods record

	Modules					
Assessment methods	**Mod101**	**Mod102**	**Mod103**	**Mod104**	**Mod105**	**Mod106**
Planning and researching						
Annotated bibliography						
Literature summary		✓				
Plan						
Proposal						✓
Research Exercise						
Essays and written coursework						
Article						
Critique				✓		
Dissertation						
Essay	✓				✓	
Project		✓				
Report						
Review				✓		
Translation						
Portfolios, diaries, reflective coursework						
CV						
Diary						
Log			✓			
Portfolio						
Reporting File						
Group or peer work						
Group Assessment						
Group Presentation		✓				
Group Report						
Peer Assessment						
Seminar Participation				✓		
Oral assessments						
Interview Techniques						
Negotiation Exercise						
Oral Assessment						
Oral Presentation				✓		
Seminar Paper						
Exams and timed tests						
Class Test						
Computer Assisted						
Examination (mixed)						
Examination (seen)					✓	✓
Examination (unseen)	✓					
Practical or field-based assessments						
Artefact/product						
Case Study						
Exhibition						✓

Fieldwork						
IT Assignment						
Placement Report						
Poster presentation						
Practical Test						
Professional Practice						
Simulation/game						

Appendix 3: Exemplars and case studies of alternative and inclusive assessments

Discipline	Current method	Alternative methods?	Same method, alternative media?	Comments
Art & Design	Written essay	At Levels 1 & 2 could be replaced by a visual essay, for example using PowerPoint (see case studies section)		
Art & Design/ Broadcast Journalism	Final year, 10,000 word traditional dissertation	A&D: Visual Product, whereby the student designs and creates an artefact and writes 1000-word piece on the process BJ: An extended project in the journalistic medium being studied	Structured essays to form a dissertation (can apply to any subject area but has been used as an alternative in Computing at NTU)	
Arts & Humanities	Written essay	A&H: Individual assessments are negotiated for Spanish modules; usually a type of written or oral assessment is agreed.	If long written work must be assessed, because of subject benchmarks or ILOs, then a choice of genres might be considered	This is an example of a practice which we are aware of going on at NTU, However, it has not been developed as a case study

Biomedical Science	Assessment on site as part of field trips to various outdoor locations, with challenging environments	Dissertation on theory/research	Assessment using virtual simulations of the environment Or, where possible, a choice of locations for each environment type	**Virtual alternatives** can be designed and used as a preset alternative to a field trip. This option is currently is used in SAT as an alternative to field trips that are in locations inaccessible to some students. However, it could also be designed as a pre-set alternative for all students
Biomedical Science	Laboratory assessments		Virtual simulations	Laboratory assessments could be undertaken by the student using a helper
Computing	Timed examinations with essay papers using graphics	Essay as coursework with text explaining concepts as questions as opposed to graphics		Text can be read by screen reader software, graphics cannot easily be read
Law	Timed exams testing legal argument	Mooting, i.e. oral debates of legal argument (with or without a time constraint)		
Social Sciences	Written essay		SS: In one third year module students are offered three different written options	This is an example of a practice which we are aware of going on at NTU, However, it has not been developed as a case study

Case studies at NTU

Levels 1&2

A **visual essay (PowerPoint essay)** is used in ArchDBE as an alternative to traditional text based essays. It has been used at Level 1, utilising 15 slides with an overall maximum word count to describe basic ideas, and at Level 2, utilising 50 slides with an increased overall maximum word count to demonstrate a more complex narrative.

For the full case study see: Arthur, L., and Marsh, P. 2008. **Visualising Academia: How to make Academia Attractive.** International Conference on Engineering and Product Design Education, 4-5 September 2008. Spain: University of Catalunya; or Arthur, L., Marsh, P. & Freeman, S. 2009. **Making the grey matter colourful: Producing academic work which is image and text based**. NTU Annual Learning & Teaching Conference on Learning Spaces, 02 April 2009. Nottingham. Nottingham Trent University (both available from Les Arthur, Lecturer in ArchDBE at NTU).

Level 1

A **web-based learning resource** was developed for Horticulture students within Landscape Management in ARES as part of the 'Triple A' (Achieving Accessible Assessment) HEFCE funded NTU project 2002-2006.

The main aim of this part of the Triple A project was to develop an inclusive approach to learning and assessment using the module of Plant Knowledge as a vehicle to challenge curriculum difficulties directly associated with disability. The approach taken by the Landscape Management team involved unique challenges within the subject area but the intention was to show a developmental process that can be adopted by other subject areas. The framework for this involved:

- Identify exiting barriers to learning, participation and assessment
- Minimising the barriers to learning, participation and assessment
- Maximising accessible resources to support learning, participation and assessment
- Engendering barrier free assessment methods for all students

For the full case study see: Ward, C., Jukes, D., and Warde, L., 2006. Inclusive by Design: **Assessing Disabled Students in Higher Education.** Nottingham: Nottingham Trent University (available from Claire Ward, in CASQ).

Level 3

A **Visual Product final project** was developed for final year students as part of the 'Triple A' (Achieving Accessible Assessment) HEFCE funded NTU project 2002-2006.

For this case study, the Design and Visual Culture team focused on the final-year 'Illustrated Written Dissertation' module. This module, available in 20- and 40-credit versions, is the culmination of the DVC track through all degree programmes. During the September 2005 to February 2006 semester, the team piloted an option which allows students to submit a 'Visual Project' (worth 20 credits) in the place of the standard written dissertation. The visual project is conceived as an expansion of the visual element of the dissertation, which requires students to submit an annotated series of images, along with a 1,000 word rationale. The emphasis is on a student displaying the ability to organise a set of images along clear thematic lines to illustrate a conceptual position or argument. There is flexibility in the form in which the student chooses to present the images and in the formats they use, including 'exhibition', 'book' or 'website'.

The learning outcomes of the module included the following:

- achieve a sustained level of intellectual engagement around a design and visual culture topic;
- employ skills of visual analysis;
- achieve effective visual and written communication;
- produce appropriate research and a bibliography;
- reflect on individual's practice, where appropriate, as part of visual culture and in relation to contextual issues – historical, theoretical, critical and cultural.

For the full case study see: Ward, C., Jukes, D., and Warde, L., 2006. Inclusive by Design: **Assessing Disabled Students in Higher Education.** Nottingham: Nottingham Trent University (available from Claire Ward, in CASQ).

Case studies from other HEIs

Source: **Staff-Student Partnership for Assessment Change and Evaluation (SPACE)** 2005 [online]. www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=10494

Case Study 5: **Viva (in conjunction with a Portfolio of their own work)**
Courses: BEng Civil Engineering, BSc, Building Surveying and the Environment, BA Architecture
Number of students participating: 120 (including 8 disabled students)
Previous assessment method: End of module test

Case Study 7: **Oral Presentation of a Research Proposal**
Course: MSc Health and Social Care
Number of students participating: 9 (including 1 disabled student)
Previous assessment method: Written assignments

Case Study 8: **End of Module Test or Coursework or Portfolio as Assessment Choice**
Course: BSc Building Surveying and Environment, BA Architecture, BSc Construction Management
Number of students participating: 146 (including 14 disabled students)
Previous assessment method: End of module test

For full details of case studies and more examples see: **Staff-Student Partnership for Assessment Change and Evaluation (SPACE)** 2005 [online]. University of Plymouth. Available at: www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=10494 [Accessed Jan 2009]; Also available in hard copy: Waterfield, J. and West, B. 2006. Inclusive Assessment in Higher Education: A Resource for Change. University of Plymouth: Plymouth (available from Claire Ward in CASQ for loan).