



Transforming the experience of students through assessment (TESTA)

What is TESTA?

Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment (TESTA www.testa.ac.uk) is an approach to investigating assessment patterns across a programme in order to identify how assessment can better support learning.

The TESTA approach has been used in over 40 UK universities, and in Australia, India and the USA. The approach involves data collection through a programme audit, student focus group and questionnaire. Data is analysed by the programme team who collectively implement change.

Assessment & feedback quick guides

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Resources

Tony Harland, Angela McLean, Rob Wass, Ellen Miller & Kwong Nui Sim (2014) An assessment arms race and its fallout: high-stakes grading and the case for slow scholarship. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2014.931927>

Why do it?

Assessment is often thought about at a modular level but students' experience of assessment is affected by all the modules they are taking at a particular time and how their current assessment relates to assessment on previous modules. The impact of modularisation has often resulted in an increase in assessment (Harland et al 2014) and lack of cohesion at the programme level.

TESTA aims to present a picture of how students experience assessment across the programme so that the team can discuss patterns of over assessment, bunching of assessment, varieties of assessment, amount and quality of feedback, timeliness of feedback etc.

How to do a TESTA audit

1. First, gather your programme team. The team should consist of the programme lead, module leads for core modules and a couple of typical option modules, the programme administrator.
2. Carry out a programme audit. You do this by counting the number of summative and formative assessments for each module and each year of the programme. You also note the different varieties of assessment (e.g. Multiple Choice Question exam, oral presentation, laboratory report, explanatory essay). See the TESTA www.testa.ac.uk and UCL TESTA Moodle for more details.
3. Carry out a student focus group, using the TESTA focus group plan. You can also add your own questions around issues that have arisen in student evaluations or the National Student Survey (NSS) data for your programme.
4. Consider using the TESTA student experience questionnaire.
5. Compare your programme audit data to the TESTA Russell Group data (see UCL TESTA Moodle)
6. Share all the data with the programme team and organise a meeting to discuss findings and agree changes (see TESTA reports and change plans in TESTA Moodle)
7. Carry out a follow up evaluation to assess the impact of any changes.