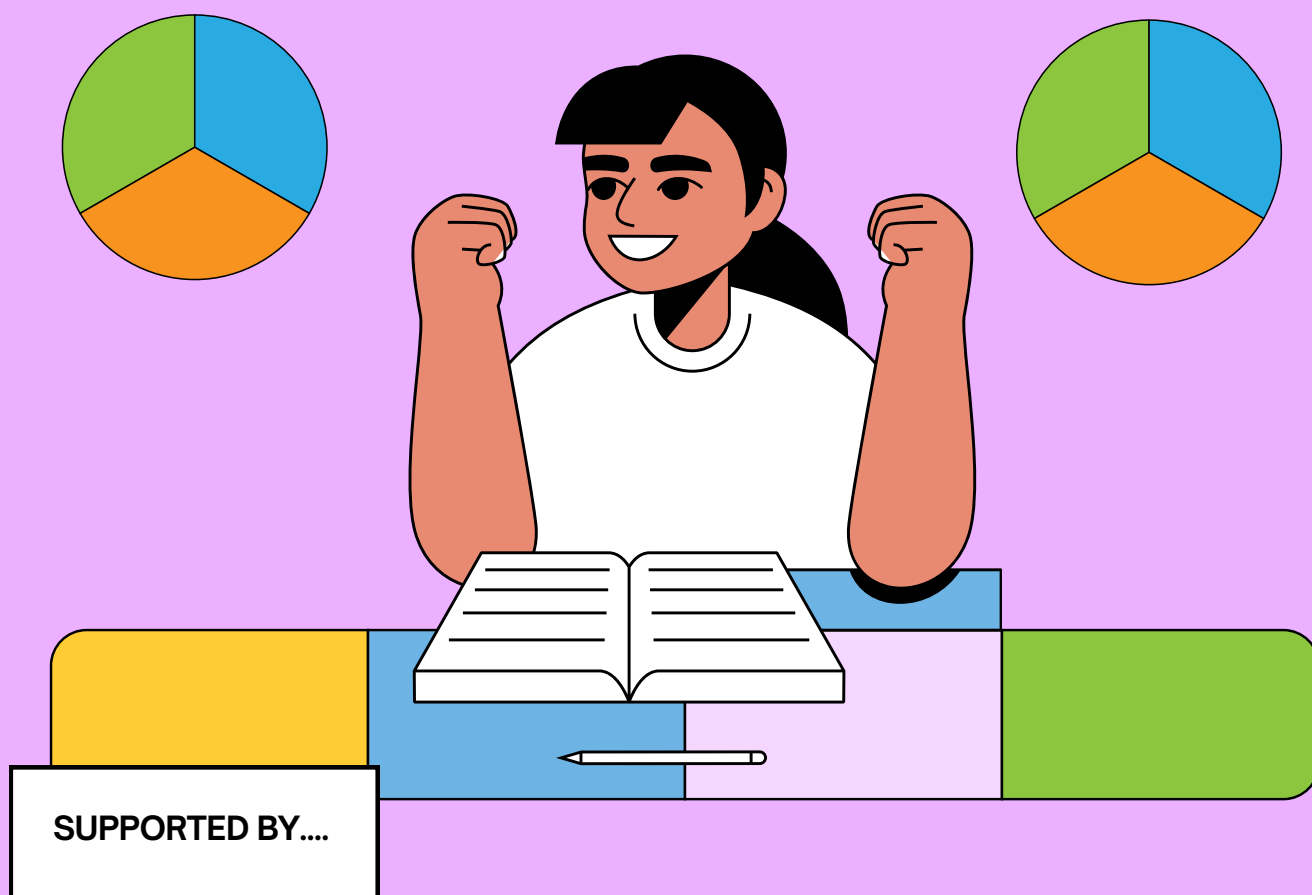


FRAMEWORK FOR FLEXIBLE ASSESSMENT

A national model for inclusive, future-ready Assessment design

Dr Miri Firth



AdvanceHE & QAA



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The University of Manchester supports scholarship and innovation that enhance inclusive, future-
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advance flexible, equitable assessment practices for all learners.



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WHAT IS FLEXIBLE ASSESSMENT?

Flexible assessment refers to approaches that enable students to demonstrate their learning through a variety of methods, timings, and formats, all aligned with intended learning outcomes. It offers students meaningful choices in how, when, and sometimes what they are assessed on in order to recognise the individual student circumstances.

Flexibility may include, but is not limited to:

- **Method:** individual or group-based work, problem-based tasks, or negotiated project elements.
- **Format of output:** e.g. written report, in-person, non-written outputs, video presentation, exam, podcast, or portfolio.
- **Timing or sequencing:** when assessments are completed within a programme, or choice of submission points.
- **Negotiated tasks or questions:** students may co-design or negotiate task focus.
- **Criteria or weighting:** opportunities to select emphasis across components.

Flexible assessment is about maintaining academic rigour while recognising diverse student strengths, lived experiences, and future goals. By aligning assessment with inclusivity and authenticity, it prepares students for the complexity of real-world professional and academic contexts.

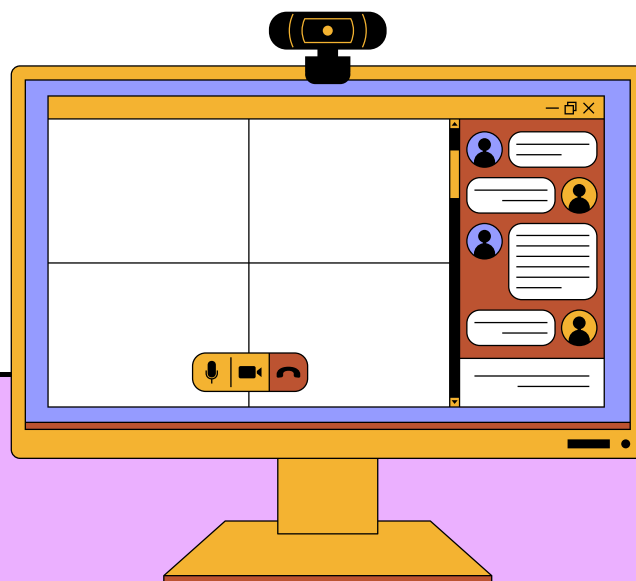


WHO IS THIS FRAMEWORK FOR?

This framework is intended for:

- **Academic staff** involved in curriculum design and delivery
- **Professional services** and learning technologists who support assessment processes
- **Senior leaders** and quality assurance leads shaping policy and assessment strategy
- **Students' Union officers** and student reps co-designing learning experiences
- **Students** on programmes can refer to this to understand the scope and purpose of Flexible Assessment
- **Professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies (PSRBs)** interested in future-fit assessment
- **Higher Education Regulatory and Enhancement Bodies** who set quality standards for all programmes of study

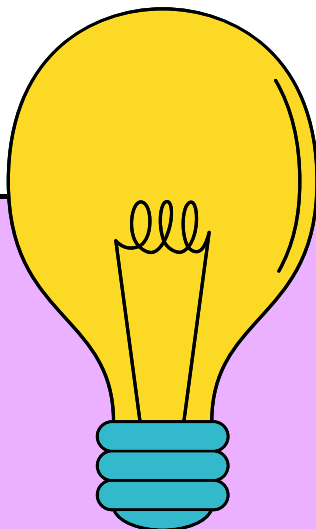
It is applicable across higher education institutions and further education colleges delivering HE programmes, and adaptable across disciplines, levels of study, and modes of delivery.



WHY IS FLEXIBLE ASSESSMENT IMPORTANT?

The national study on optionality in assessment (Firth et al., 2023, QAA) identified several drivers for change:

- Improved student outcomes: In some contexts, students who could choose their assessment format achieved stronger academic results.
- Enhanced student satisfaction: Across different programmes, students reported higher levels of engagement and motivation when given meaningful choice.
- Closing attainment gaps: Optionality has allowed students from diverse backgrounds to better showcase their strengths, supporting efforts to address differential attainment.
- Student autonomy and real-world readiness: Making choices develops decision-making, metacognitive awareness, and confidence — key graduate attributes.
- Positive wellbeing impacts: Flexibility and clear guidance reduced stress and anxiety for many learners.
- Inclusive and authentic design: Flexible assessments mirror professional practices, emphasising creativity, critical thinking, and communication skills.
- AI-aware assessment: Offering a range of authentic tasks makes assessments less vulnerable to automation and plagiarism, while supporting originality and human-centred skills.
- Professional growth for staff: Introducing new assessment formats can make marking more engaging, reduce repetition, and inspire innovation in pedagogy.



CONTINUED....WHY IS FLEXIBLE ASSESSMENT IMPORTANT?

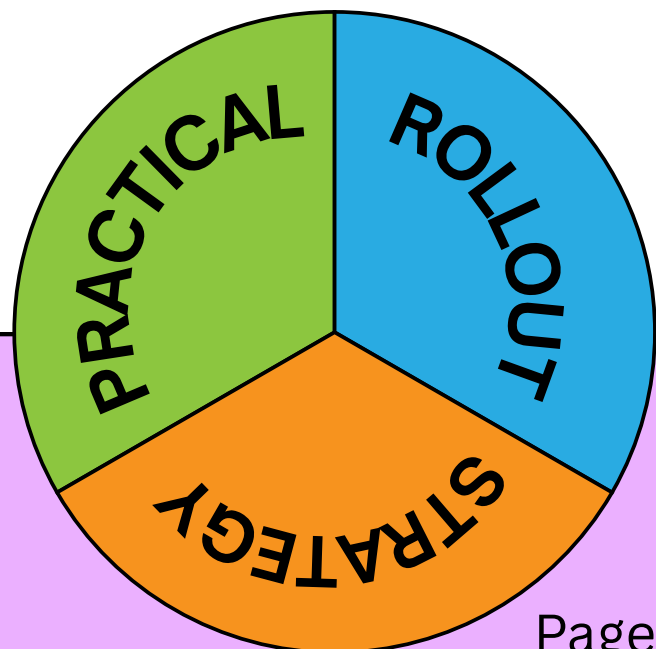
Despite clear benefits, uptake of flexible assessment remains uneven across the sector. This is due to:

- **Awareness and confidence:** Many staff are uncertain what flexible assessment looks like in practice, or how to implement it at programme level.
- **Fairness and consistency:** Concerns remain about ensuring parity across different assessment options, especially in moderation and marking.
- **Workload and systems:** Additional complexity for academic staff, professional services, and digital systems can act as barriers if not addressed institutionally.
- **Disciplinary differences:** Flexibility is more challenging to implement in some STEM and professionally accredited programmes, particularly in foundational content areas with highly standardised requirements.
- **Cultural factors:** Perceptions that assessment must be “done as it has always been done” can inhibit innovation, even though many staff are open to new approaches.

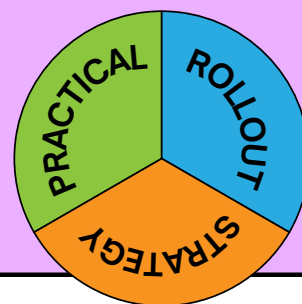
This framework directly addresses these issues by providing definitions, models, and tools to support confident, equitable, and scalable implementation.

This Framework uses 3 approaches to support embedding Flexible Assessment:

1. Practical
2. Rollout
3. Strategy



HOW TO USE THIS FRAMEWORK

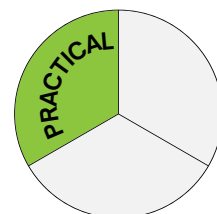


1. Practical Approach – “Start with what you can do now”

This section is designed for staff who want tangible examples and tools to make assessment more flexible straight away. It can be used to:

- Audit existing assessments for flexibility, inclusivity, and optionality
- Explore alternative formats aligned to learning outcomes (e.g. blogs, podcasts, portfolios)
- Inspire small-scale changes to modules or assignments
- Share with teams in curriculum design meetings or academic CPD sessions

Use this approach if you're a lecturer, tutor, or support staff looking for ideas you can pilot immediately.

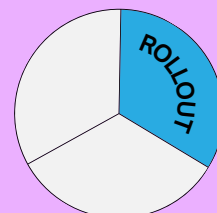


2. Rollout Approach – “Scaffold change in your institution”

This section supports those looking to embed flexible assessment within quality processes, curriculum review, or team-wide delivery. It includes:

- Guidance for programme-level design and mapping optionality across a curriculum
- Considerations for moderation, marking, and support structures
- Discussion prompts for departments or cross-functional teams
- Ideas for engaging students and stakeholders in co-creation

Use this approach if you're leading curriculum reform, managing programme delivery, or coordinating assessment processes across multiple units.

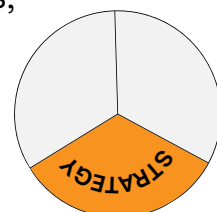


3. Strategy Approach – “Drive sustainable cultural change”

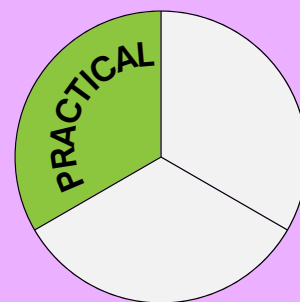
This section is aimed at senior leaders and policy influencers. It supports strategic embedding of flexible assessment through:

- Alignment with institutional priorities (e.g. student experience, AI-readiness, inclusive design)
- Links to national policy (e.g. QAA, Advance HE, OfS) and professional standards
- Strategic levers for implementation (e.g. review cycles, workload models, CPD recognition)
- Messaging for public and stakeholder communication

Use this approach if you're shaping institutional policy, leading change programmes, or advocating for sector-wide innovation.



APPROACH 1:



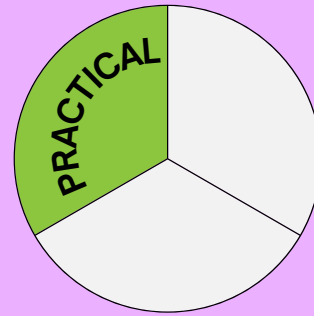
Practical Design The 4Cs of Flexible Assessment

At the heart of flexible assessment is effective, inclusive assessment design. The 4Cs provide a pedagogically grounded starting point for academic staff and course teams:

Element	Description	Application Examples
Choice	Offer meaningful and pedagogically justified student choices*.	Format (e.g. video, report), timing, individual/team
Clarity	Provide clear, transparent, accessible criteria, expectations and rationale for each option.	Transparent rubrics, choice guides, marking schemes
Co-Design	Engage students in shaping assessment practices, topics or formats.	Negotiated questions, design workshops, polls
Consistency	Ensure all options are aligned with intended learning outcomes and equivalent in rigour.	Learning outcome mapping, internal moderation, feedback approached.

*A pedagogically justified choice is one where the flexibility offered to students directly supports the intended learning outcomes and development of disciplinary or transferable skills, rather than simply adding variety or convenience. In other words, it's a choice that has a clear learning rationale, grounded in the aims of the module or programme, not just student preference.

CHOICE



There are multiple opportunities and approaches to choice. It is important to ensure the correct one is offered to students so that systems, professional services, colleagues and students are not negatively impacted. For example, if we use a Geography fieldwork example, students are able to select between an in-person or virtual experience, with corresponding assessment formats (live presentation or pre-recorded submission). This supported autonomy and inclusivity but also created additional workload in ensuring parity between routes.

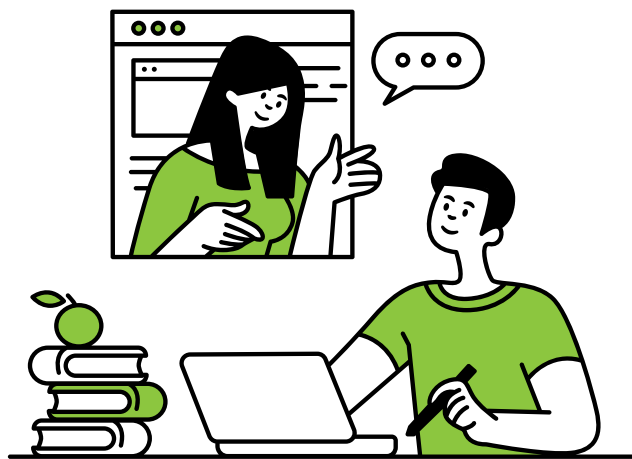
Effective practice

Loughborough University – Flexible assessment choice in laboratory/ research module
In a PSD 632 Advanced Laboratory & Research Methods module, students could choose how to present their experiment: poster, PowerPoint, vlog, infographic, interactive map, or a custom format (pending approval). The instructor consulted with students on choice and emphasised equivalence in marking.

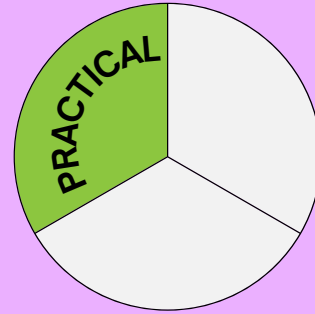
University of Liverpool – Flexible submission types across modules. The University of Liverpool's Flexible Assessment Guidance enables students to select from submission types like annotated bibliography, blog post, or report, as long as each option maps to the same learning outcomes

Questions to consider:

1. When should students make their choice of mode/assessment?
2. Can they switch if circumstances change (e.g. illness, travel restrictions)?
3. How does choice support alternative arrangements and student agency?
4. What barriers currently make this module's assessment inaccessible to some students?



CLARITY



Clarity involves ensuring students fully understand the expectations, requirements and implications of the assessment routes available. The assessment should be transparent across any flexibility so that students can see equivalence clearly. In the fieldwork example, guidance was provided on both the in-person and virtual options, making clear the environments, outputs, and marking approaches. Timing is critical here: clarity needs to be offered early enough for students to make informed decisions but balanced so they are not overwhelmed with unnecessary detail. Clear, consistent messaging also helps reduce anxiety and fosters confidence in preparation.

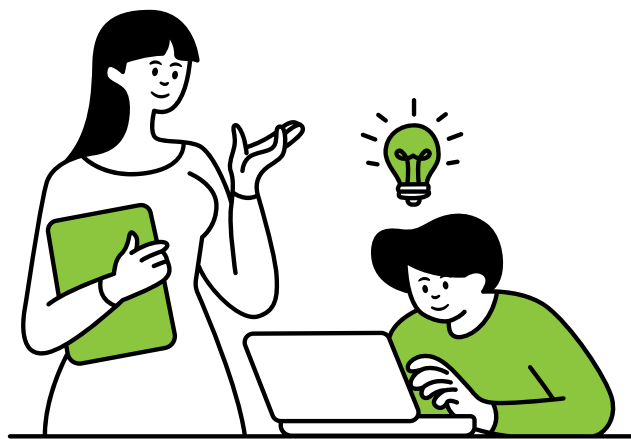
Effective practice

The University of Manchester – Nursing students co-designed their assessments by selecting from multiple formats, such as essays, reports, posters, or podcasts, each aligned to identical learning outcomes and criteria. This collaborative approach strengthened student agency, ensured transparency, and supported equitable marking across diverse outputs.

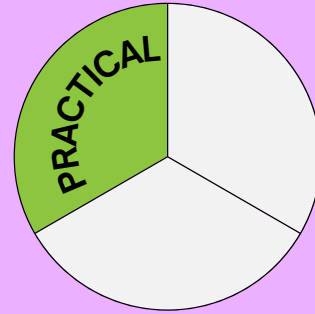
Sheffield Hallam University – SHU provides clear guidance to help colleagues design fair and transparent assessment choices. Staff are advised that all options must enable students to meet the same learning outcomes and require equivalent effort, with detailed equivalency measures (e.g., six minutes of presentation time equating to 1,000 written words). Colleagues are supported to apply consistent marking criteria across all formats and to prioritise both actual and perceived fairness, ensuring no student is advantaged or disadvantaged by their chosen assessment method.

Questions to consider:

1. At what point in the student journey should clarity be provided (handbooks, pre-briefings, fieldwork preparation)?
2. How should changes in assessment requirements (e.g. due to external circumstances) be communicated clearly and consistently?
3. What are the most effective formats for communicating assessment expectations?
4. How are the students guided through flexible choices and do they have decision support?



CO-DESIGN



Co-design emphasises the value of working in partnership with students, colleagues, and professional services when shaping flexible assessments. In the Geography example, involving students in shaping or reviewing the assessment choices could have ensured both routes felt equally meaningful and relevant. Co-design also extends to engaging academic teams in understanding the “why” behind flexibility, supporting staff buy-in, and aligning assessment practices with programme-level goals. By embedding co-design, programmes can create more inclusive environments where students feel empowered and staff feel supported in delivering change. The challenge is balancing diverse views and ensuring decisions are still manageable within institutional systems.

Effective practice

University of Glasgow - Their ‘Flexible Submission Guidance’ incorporates student and staff input in shaping submission options, timelines, and fallback procedures. The guidance explicitly invites staff to consult with students when designing alternative submission formats and windows, encouraging negotiation around timing and format while safeguarding academic standards. This participatory approach promotes shared ownership, ensures that flexible practices remain relevant to learner needs, and helps staff anticipate practical barriers in implementation.

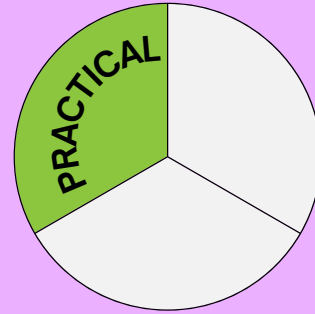
University of Northampton - At the University of Northampton, their ‘Optionality in Assessment’ snapshot encourages early collaboration with students in designing assessment options. This is an explicit example of the co-design principle in action in assessment development.

Questions to consider:

1. How can students be involved in co-designing or reviewing assessment pathways?
2. What approaches can help staff and professional services engage with flexible assessment from the outset?
3. How can co-design balance innovation with institutional requirements and workload realities?



CONSISTENCY



Consistency requires that all assessment pathways are underpinned by the same academic standards, marking approaches, equal workload, and quality assurance processes. In the Geography example, both the live and pre-recorded presentations were assessed using the same marking criteria, supporting fairness across modes. Consistency also refers to student experience: ensuring that whichever route they take, students receive comparable opportunities for feedback and progression. This helps to build trust in the system, while also safeguarding staff against accusations of inequity.

Effective practice

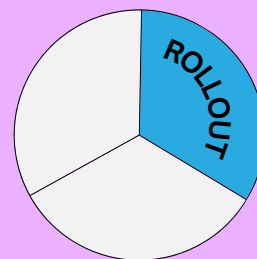
University of Sussex - Sussex's student reflections on introducing optionality emphasised the importance of fairness across assessment formats: students felt confidence when they saw consistent criteria and parity in expectations regardless of their chosen format. They underscored that consistency in marking rubrics, scaling, and feedback was crucial to maintain trust and that the quality of work, not the format, determines assessment.

Questions to consider:

1. How are marking criteria and moderation processes applied consistently across assessment formats?
2. How can programme teams ensure students receive equivalent feedback regardless of their chosen pathway?
3. How can consistency be assured across different cohorts and delivery teams?



APPROACH 2:



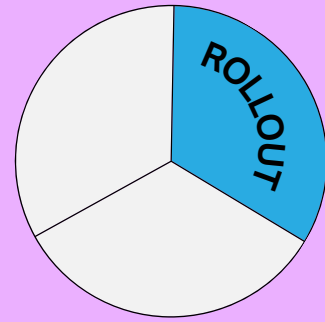
Rollout

The STEP-ER Model to rollout Flexible Assessment

The STEP-ER model helps institutions scaffold flexible assessment within existing structures, ensuring it is strategically supported, pedagogically robust, and operationally sustainable across departments and programmes. Each stage emphasises collaboration between academic, professional services, and student partners.

Stage	Institutional Focus
Support	Provide professional development, assessment design toolkits, and digital templates. Configure student record, timetabling, and submission systems to support flexibility.
Tailor	Adapt assessment flexibility to programme needs, PSRB requirements, and student demographics while maintaining equivalency and calibration across formats.
Empower	Enable students to make informed choices through guidance, reflection tools, and exemplars, embedding co-design and formative practice.
Protect	Safeguard standards, ensure parity, manage workload, and embed staff wellbeing, moderation, and quality assurance.
Evaluate	Monitor outcomes, collect staff and student feedback, and use findings to refine and scale practice.

SUPPORT



Support is the foundation of flexible assessment. Institutions must provide professional development, assessment design toolkits, and digital templates so that staff can build confidence and consistency in offering flexibility. Support should be front-loaded with clear logistical planning, communication strategies, and system readiness established early in the process. Administrative systems such as student records, timetabling, and digital submission platforms (e.g., Turnitin, Moodle, Blackboard) need to accommodate choice-recording, variable deadlines, and diverse submission formats.

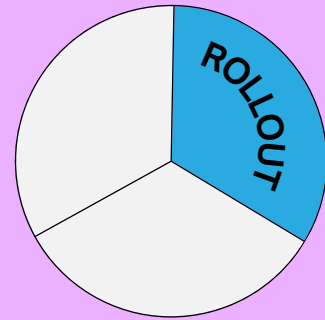
Support must also extend to Professional Services, including registries, digital learning teams, quality and assessment offices, whose expertise ensures that flexibility is operationally viable. Pre-support for students is equally vital, helping them identify strengths, learning needs, and competencies before making assessment choices. Transparency at programme level, for example, through assessment maps showing workload and timing, supports both staff coordination and student decision-making.

Questions to prompt discussion:

1. How can Professional Services and academic teams co-design systems and workflows that make flexibility sustainable?
2. How can front-loaded planning and clear communication prevent confusion or inequity later in the assessment process?



TAILOR

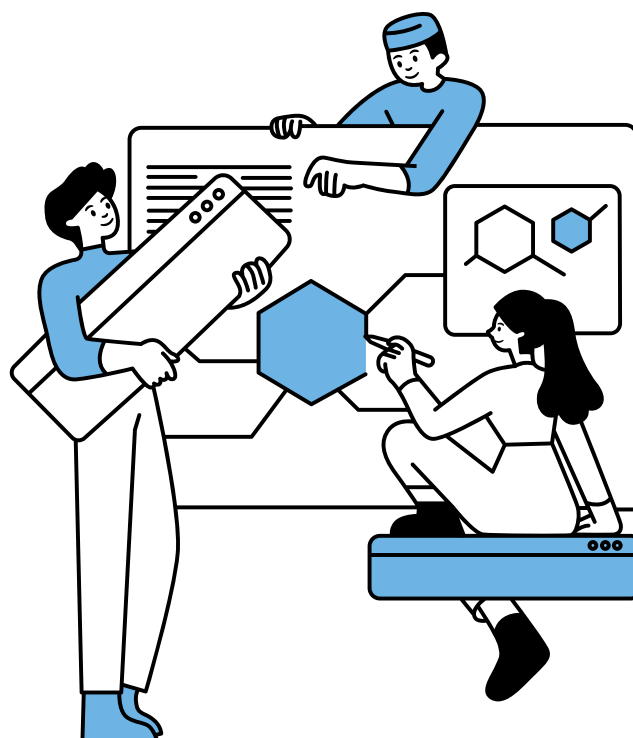


Tailoring ensures assessment flexibility fits programme needs, PSRB requirements, and student demographics. Flexibility must be deliberately designed, not retrofitted, to maintain parity and fairness. Tailoring requires early consultation with accrediting bodies, employers, and professional communities to ensure alternative formats remain valid and credible.

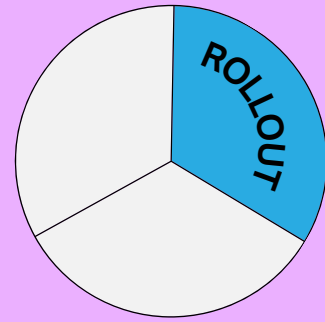
At this stage, equivalency and calibration are essential. Word counts, presentation lengths, or artefact expectations must be comparable across options, and moderation teams should review outputs to ensure consistency in standard and marking. Tailoring also considers the lived experience of learners, acknowledging varied paces, access needs, and contexts of study.

Questions to prompt discussion:

1. How can we adapt flexible assessment to meet PSRB standards while ensuring equivalency and calibration across formats?
2. What processes allow for flexibility without compromising inclusivity, fairness, or professional credibility?



EMPOWER



Empowerment is central to flexible assessment and should feature throughout the model, not only after design decisions are made. Students should be equipped and involved, supported with reflection tools, exemplars, and guidance to make informed choices, and actively engaged in co-designing or reviewing assessment formats.

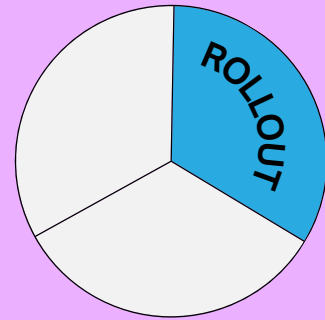
Empowerment also reframes assessment as developmental rather than purely evaluative. Flexibility can help students build professional identity, resilience, communication, and readiness for practice. Institutions should embed safe, low-stakes environments, such as formative tasks, pilot options, or rehearsal assignments, so students can experiment before making high-stakes decisions.

Questions to prompt discussion:

1. How can students be meaningfully involved in co-designing or testing flexible assessment options?
2. How can we scaffold student confidence through formative and reflective opportunities before summative choice?



PROTECT

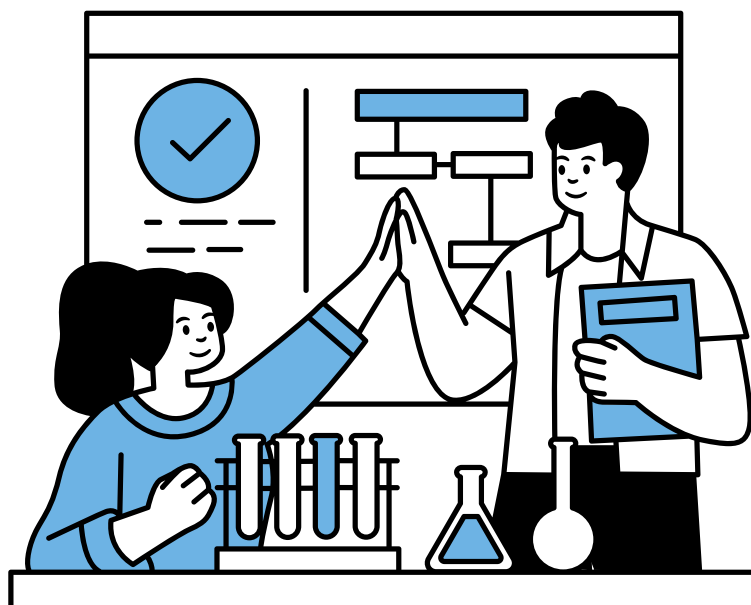


Protection ensures that flexibility is fair, sustainable, and quality-assured. It should be understood as the active facilitation of equity and wellbeing for both staff and students. Protection involves using calibrated rubrics and equivalency matrices to distinguish between essential learning outcomes and optional personalisation, aligning markers to maintain parity, and embedding moderation and peer calibration processes across formats.

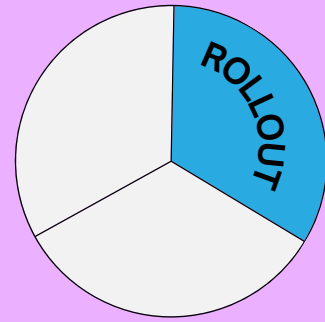
Protection also means ensuring staff protection and psychological safety. Sustainable flexibility requires retraining, reflection time, and workload balance, alongside opportunities for peer learning and collaborative moderation. Change processes should explicitly recognise emotional labour and the need for supportive environments. Institutions can embed reflective practice within assessment redesign, allowing teams to iterate and improve. Piloting new assessment options in low-stakes contexts is encouraged before large-scale adoption.

Questions to prompt discussion:

1. How do we maintain parity, calibration, and fairness when students take different assessment routes?
2. How can we protect staff wellbeing through workload planning, reflective spaces, and psychologically safe change processes?



EVALUATE



Evaluation provides the evidence needed to sustain and scale flexible assessment. Institutions should collect feedback from staff, students, and examiners, using mixed methods (e.g., surveys, focus groups, analytics) to assess outcomes such as satisfaction, performance, equity, and workload. Evaluation should include impact mapping, identifying whether flexibility improves learning engagement, progression, and staff experience.

Findings should inform continuous enhancement, supporting leadership decisions and reinforcing a culture of reflective improvement. Transparent reporting closes the feedback loop, showing stakeholders how evidence is shaping policy and practice.

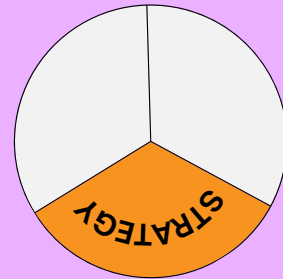
Questions to prompt discussion:

1. What evidence will we gather to evaluate the impact of flexible assessment on students, staff, and institutional systems?
2. How can findings be shared to inform ongoing enhancement and sector collaboration?



APPROACH 3:

Strategic alignment The 3-lens model



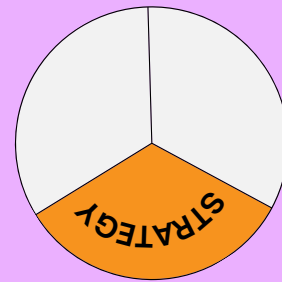
For flexible assessment to thrive, senior leaders and institutional decision-makers must view it through three interconnected lenses: Pedagogic, Equity, and Feasibility. The model applies both to evaluating existing assessment practice and to identifying strategic need for change, ensuring that flexible assessment becomes an integrated, evidence-informed feature of institutional design.

Together, the lenses enable leaders to align strategy, culture, and operations, ensuring that flexibility is not an isolated innovation but a sustainable, inclusive, and future-ready approach.

$\frac{3}{5}$

Lens	Strategic Focus
Pedagogic	Does it improve learning, engagement, autonomy, and real-world readiness while supporting accessibility and
Equity	Does it reduce barriers, promote staff and student wellbeing, widen participation, and close awarding
Feasibility	Is it scalable, digitally supported, quality-assured, and aligned with PSRB standards and cross-institutional

PEDAGOGIC LENS



The pedagogic lens focuses on whether flexible assessment enhances learning, engagement, autonomy, accessibility, and real-world readiness. Flexibility supports personalised learning and the development of transferable skills such as communication, professionalism, and problem-solving, increasingly vital in a world shaped by Generative AI (GenAI).

Programme-level discussion is critical to prevent over-assessment and to scaffold coherent assessment journeys. Equally, embedding formative loops and feedback mechanisms ensures that flexibility does not compromise academic depth. Continuous feedback engagement, such as dialogue-based feedback, student reflection on comments, and co-review of rubrics, is key to ensuring pedagogy remains responsive.

Evidence indicators:

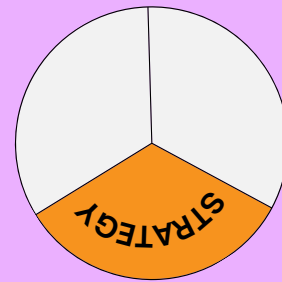
- Student performance data: attainment, progression, reduction in resits/referrals.
- Student engagement data: attendance, submission rates, interaction with formative feedback.
- Student feedback: NSS/PTES/MEQ items on fairness, clarity, and skills development.
- Graduate outcomes: employability metrics, employer feedback, professional skills audits.
- Evidence of authentic learning: tasks mapped to real-world contexts, interdisciplinary work, and GenAI-enhanced assessment literacy.

Key question for measurement:

Are students learning more deeply, engaging meaningfully with feedback, and developing transferable, inclusive skills through flexible assessment?



EQUITY LENS



The equity lens examines whether flexibility reduces barriers and creates environments in which all learners and staff can flourish. This means addressing exclusionary assessment norms and positioning flexibility as an enabler for excellence rather than as an accommodation.

Equity extends beyond students: staff equity and wellbeing must also be protected. Workload transparency, retraining opportunities, and psychological safety are essential to ensure that flexibility benefits everyone involved. Inclusive assessment design should explicitly consider neurodiverse learners, racially minoritised students, those with caring responsibilities, and first-generation entrants, ensuring equivalent access to formative practice, advice, and decision-making support.

Evidence indicators:

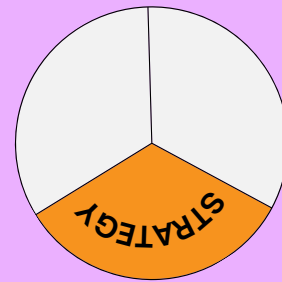
- Awarding gap data: attainment differentials by ethnicity, gender, disability, socioeconomic background.
- Uptake patterns: which student groups select which options and why.
- Staff wellbeing: workload, psychological safety, and change-readiness survey data.
- Student wellbeing: stress and anxiety metrics, mitigation requests, extension data.
- Accessibility audits: compliance with inclusive design principles and availability of multiple means of representation and engagement.

Key question for measurement:

Is flexible assessment promoting inclusion and wellbeing for both students and staff while reducing systemic barriers to success?



FEASIBILITY LENS



The feasibility lens considers whether flexible assessment is operationally viable, digitally supported, and scalable within institutional and professional frameworks. This is often the most complex area, requiring collaboration between academic teams, professional services, and leadership to ensure feasibility without overburdening staff. Strong feasibility planning means embedding flexibility into digital infrastructure (student record systems, timetabling, submission portals, analytics dashboards) and aligning these systems with PSRB and accreditation requirements. Cross-institutional collaboration and shared equivalency frameworks can help standardise approaches while respecting local needs.

Feasibility also requires cultural change, moving beyond “this is the way we’ve always done it” and recognising that well-planned flexibility can reduce workload by lowering misconduct cases, appeals, and student dissatisfaction.

Evidence indicators:

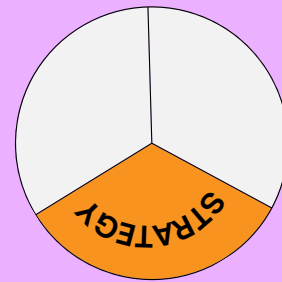
- Staff workload surveys: teaching, marking, and admin time before/after implementation.
- Professional services data: registry, QA, and IT system changes; workflow impact.
- Consistency metrics: moderation, calibration reports, external examiner feedback.
- Digital readiness: integration of flexible assessment features in core systems (e.g., submission, feedback, data capture).
- PSRB compliance: alignment of flexible assessment with accreditation standards.
- Institutional uptake: proportion of programmes piloting or embedding flexible assessment.

Key question for measurement:

Is flexible assessment supported by the digital, administrative, and professional frameworks needed to sustain it across disciplines and institutions?



FEASIBILITY LENS



The feasibility lens considers whether flexible assessment is operationally viable, digitally supported, and scalable within institutional and professional frameworks. This is often the most complex area, requiring collaboration between academic teams, professional services, and leadership to ensure feasibility without overburdening staff. Strong feasibility planning means embedding flexibility into digital infrastructure (student record systems, timetabling, submission portals, analytics dashboards) and aligning these systems with PSRB and accreditation requirements. Cross-institutional collaboration and shared equivalency frameworks can help standardise approaches while respecting local needs.

Feasibility also requires cultural change, moving beyond “this is the way we’ve always done it” and recognising that well-planned flexibility can reduce workload by lowering misconduct cases, appeals, and student dissatisfaction.

Evidence indicators:

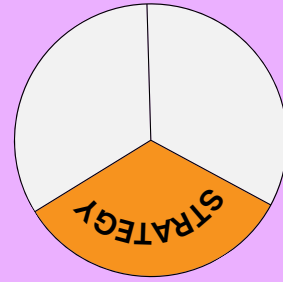
- Staff workload surveys: teaching, marking, and admin time before/after implementation.
- Professional services data: registry, QA, and IT system changes; workflow impact.
- Consistency metrics: moderation, calibration reports, external examiner feedback.
- Digital readiness: integration of flexible assessment features in core systems (e.g., submission, feedback, data capture).
- PSRB compliance: alignment of flexible assessment with accreditation standards.
- Institutional uptake: proportion of programmes piloting or embedding flexible assessment.

Key question for measurement:

Is flexible assessment supported by the digital, administrative, and professional frameworks needed to sustain it across disciplines and institutions?



STRATEGY



To ensure the 3-Lens Model leads to continuous improvement, institutions should embed an Evaluate and Reflect (ER) phase within strategic cycles. Evaluation should use evidence indicators from all three lenses to monitor progress, highlight equity impacts, and capture cultural as well as operational outcomes.

This ongoing monitoring process should:

- Use both quantitative and qualitative evidence (e.g., performance analytics, focus groups, examiner feedback).
- Report annually to programme and institutional committees, closing the loop on enhancement activity.
- Map outcomes to strategic KPIs on inclusion, wellbeing, GenAI readiness, and educational innovation.
- Support transparent communication of what works, and what requires recalibration, to build sector-wide confidence in flexible assessment.



TEMPLATES

The four Flexible Assessment Templates on the following pages provide practical tools to help staff and students embed the Framework for Flexible Assessment in everyday practice. Together, they support the principles of choice, clarity, co-design, and consistency, the STEP-ER model for implementation, and the Three Lenses of pedagogy, equity, and feasibility. Each template translates the framework into action, ensuring that flexibility is meaningful, equitable, and quality-assured.

Template 1 – Student Choice Decision Aid empowers learners to make informed decisions about assessment format, aligning with the Choice and Clarity principles and the Empower stage of the STEP-ER model. It encourages reflection on strengths, access needs, and professional goals, building assessment literacy and learner autonomy.

Template 2 – Group Work Contract promotes Co-design and Consistency, giving students ownership of collaborative assessments while protecting fairness and accountability. It supports Tailor and Protect stages by clarifying roles, expectations, and processes for conflict resolution.

Template 3 – PSRB Equivalency Mapping ensures parity across assessment options, addressing Protect and Feasibility considerations. It allows teams to demonstrate alignment with PSRB and quality assurance standards, reinforcing academic integrity while enabling flexible design.

Template 4 – Consent and Privacy Guidance for Public-Facing Work integrates ethical, legal, and accessibility considerations, supporting Equity and Protect. It safeguards students' rights while encouraging authentic, outward-facing assessment practice.

Collectively, these templates operationalise flexibility, making it transparent, inclusive, and sustainable across programmes.



TEMPLATE 1

Student Choice decision aid

Consideration	Reflection Questions for Students	My Notes / Preferred Option
Learning outcomes	Which assessment format best allows me to demonstrate the required skills?	
Assessment criteria & weighting	What is the assessment criteria & what are the weighted components?	
My strengths	Do I communicate ideas better through writing, visuals, or speaking?	
Practicalities	Do I have access to the tools/equipment needed for this format (e.g., video, software)?	
Feedback opportunities	What formative feedback is available for each format?	
Workload and timing	How does each option fit with my other deadlines?	
Accessibility & comfort	Which option supports my learning preferences or access needs?	
Professional relevance	Which format aligns best with my career goals or industry practice?	
Decision summary	My chosen format and reason for selection:	

TEMPLATE 1

Student Choice decision aid

Purpose:

To guide students in selecting an assessment format that best suits their learning style, access needs, and professional goals while ensuring alignment with module learning outcomes.

When to use:

At the start of the module or assessment briefing stage. Ideally after the assessment options have been explained.

Who uses it:

Students, with optional guidance from academic advisors or module leaders.

How to use:

1. Share the template when introducing flexible assessment options.
2. Ask students to reflect on each question (learning outcomes, strengths, practicalities, feedback, workload, accessibility, professional relevance).
3. Encourage students to note their preferred option and reasoning in the “Decision Summary.”
4. Optionally, ask students to discuss their choice with a tutor or peer before final submission.
5. Keep completed aids as part of reflective or formative assessment evidence.



TEMPLATE 2

Group Work Contract Template

Section	Agreement / Details
Group members	<i>Names and contact details</i>
Project scope	<i>What is the group delivering?</i>
Individual roles	<i>Who is responsible for each task or component?</i>
Communication plan	<i>How and when will we meet? What platforms will we use (e.g., Teams, email)?</i>
Decision-making	<i>How will we make group decisions or resolve disagreements?</i>
Deadlines and milestones	<i>Key dates for drafts, rehearsals, and submission.</i>
Feedback and peer review	<i>How will we give constructive feedback within the group?</i>
Conflict resolution	<i>What steps will we take if issues arise (e.g., contact module lead after two missed deadlines)?</i>
Acknowledgement	<i>All members agree to the terms and shared contribution. (Signatures / digital consent)</i>

TEMPLATE 2

Group Work Contract Template

Purpose:

To establish shared expectations, promote collaboration, and reduce conflict in flexible or co-designed group assessments.

When to use:

At the start of a group project, ideally in the first group meeting or after teams are formed.

Who uses it:

Student groups, supported by module leaders or tutors.

How to use:

1. Each group completes the contract collaboratively.
2. Agree on project scope, roles, communication methods, and decision-making processes.
3. Record milestones, feedback plans, and conflict resolution steps.
4. All members confirm their agreement with digital or written consent.
5. Tutors retain a copy to support fair marking and moderation if disputes arise.



TEMPLATE 3

PSRB Equivalency Mapping Template

Learning Outcome / Competency	PSRB Requirement / Standard	Assessment Option A (e.g., Essay)	Assessment Option B (e.g., Presentation)	Evidence of Equivalency / Calibration	Reviewer/Sig n-off
Demonstrate analytical reasoning	Must show critical analysis and synthesis	2,000-word written analysis	10-minute oral defence with slides	Both assessed using same rubric criteria for critical thinking	
Apply professional ethics	Must reference PSRB code of conduct	Case study reflection	Podcast scenario discussion	Same marking criterion "ethical awareness" weighted equally	
Communicate effectively to diverse audiences	Must show clarity of communication	Written report to policy audience	Recorded policy briefing	Equivalent marking for structure, accuracy, and clarity	

TEMPLATE 3

PSRB Equivalency Mapping Template

Purpose:

To evidence how different assessment formats meet the same learning outcomes and PSRB (Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Body) requirements.

When to use:

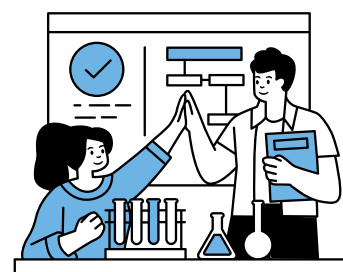
During assessment design or validation, but before implementing new or flexible assessment options.

Who uses it:

Programme leaders, quality assurance teams, and module leads.

How to use:

1. List each learning outcome or competency in the first column.
2. Identify corresponding PSRB standards or external benchmarks.
3. Describe the alternative assessment formats (e.g., essay vs. presentation).
4. Document how equivalency is maintained (e.g., shared rubrics, calibration activities).
5. Have reviewers or external examiners sign off equivalency to support audit trails.



TEMPLATE 4

Consent and Privacy Guidance for Public-Facing Work

Area	Guidance / Requirement	Completed (✓)	Notes
Informed consent	<i>Students understand how and where their work will be shared (e.g., blogs, exhibitions, YouTube).</i>		
Right to opt out	<i>Alternative private submission route offered with no penalty.</i>		
Personal data	<i>No personal identifiers, contact info, or confidential data included without consent.</i>		
Third-party content	<i>Images, music, or data used under licence or fair use; sources credited.</i>		
Institutional ownership	<i>Clarify copyright and reuse rights (student retains authorship unless otherwise stated).</i>		
GenAI usage declaration	<i>Students declare and reference any use of Generative AI in creation or editing.</i>		
Accessibility compliance	<i>Public-facing content includes captions, alt-text, and accessible file types.</i>		
Supervisor approval	<i>Assessor confirms ethical standards and privacy guidance met.</i>		

TEMPLATE 4

Consent and Privacy Guidance for Public-Facing Work

Purpose:

To protect students' rights and privacy when assessments are made public (e.g., blogs, showcases, exhibitions, or digital portfolios).

When to use:

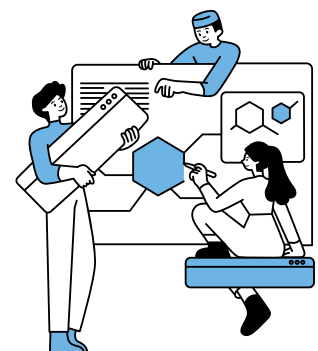
Before students begin any assessment that will be published, shared, or publicly accessible.

Who uses it:

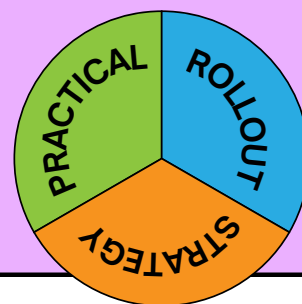
Module leaders, students, and supervisors overseeing public-facing projects.

How to use:

1. Review the checklist with students at the start of the assessment.
2. Confirm that informed consent has been obtained and students understand how their work will be used.
3. Ensure students can opt out or choose a private submission route without penalty.
4. Check accessibility, copyright, and GenAI declaration requirements.
5. Tutors sign off once all criteria are met to confirm compliance with institutional ethics and data policies.



HOW CAN YOU USE THIS FRAMEWORK?



Lecturer / Module Leader

As a lecturer, you can use the 4Cs (Choice, Clarity, Co-Design, Consistency) to audit and redesign your assessment practices. The framework helps you introduce student choice without compromising learning outcomes or fairness. It guides you to build clarity into marking criteria, offer structured support for assessment decisions, and explore co-creation methods that develop student autonomy and motivation.

Example: Reworking a single high-stakes essay into a choice of formats (e.g., podcast, policy brief, or traditional essay), all aligned with the same learning outcomes and criteria.

Student

As a student, this framework empowers you to understand the purpose behind flexible assessment and how to make informed choices that match your strengths and goals. It encourages dialogue with your lecturers and feedback on what works — helping shape a more inclusive and responsive learning environment.

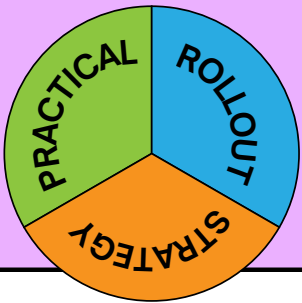
Example: Using the guidance and scaffolding in a module to select a presentation instead of a written report, and reflecting on how this helps you build communication skills for your future career.

Professional Services Staff

Whether you're in a learning support, timetabling, technology, or quality role, this framework provides a scaffold (STEP) to make assessment flexibility operational. You can use it to streamline administrative workflows, enable digital tools for submission/feedback, and collaborate with academics to maintain academic integrity and reduce workload spikes.

Example: Helping design a digital platform that enables students to choose their submission format and date within a controlled assessment window, with QA checks in place.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS FRAMEWORK?



Senior Leader (e.g. Dean, Head of School, PVC Education)

As a senior leader, the 3-Lens Strategic Model (Pedagogic, Equity, Feasibility) supports policy and strategic change. You can use the framework to align flexible assessment with institutional goals, such as widening participation, AI-resilient pedagogy, or graduate outcomes, and to invest in the digital and professional development infrastructure needed to embed change sustainably.

Example: Embedding the framework into an education strategy refresh or NSS action plan, ensuring all programmes audit for optionality and inclusive assessment.

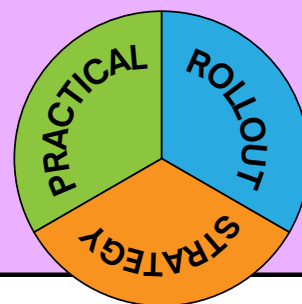


Students’ Union President

As a President, this framework gives you a platform for advocacy. You can champion student voice in assessment design, push for transparent and inclusive assessment practices, and work with staff to ensure flexibility is not only offered but supported with guidance and fairness.

Example: Proposing a student-staff partnership project to pilot optionality in assessment in key programmes, using this framework as the blueprint.

ALIGNMENT TO PSF (2023 EDITION)



The PSF is structured around three key dimensions:

- Areas of Activity (A)
- Core Knowledge (K)
- Professional Values (V)

Below is a mapped alignment between our three-part Framework for Flexible Assessment and the PSF dimensions:

Approach 1: Practical Design – The 4Cs (Choice, Clarity, Co-Design, Consistency)

Mapped to PSF:

A1: Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes

A3: Assess and give feedback for learning

K4: Appropriate use of digital and/or other technologies, and resources for learning

K5: Requirements for quality assurance and enhancement, and their implications for practice

V1: Respect individual learners and diverse groups of learners

V2: Promote engagement in learning and equity of opportunity for all to reach their potential

Approach 2: Rollout – The STEP-ER Model (Support, Tailor, Empower, Protect, Evaluate)

Mapped to PSF:

A2: Teach and/or support learning through appropriate approaches and environments

A4: Support and guide learners

K3: Critical evaluation as a basis for effective practice

V3: Use scholarship, or research, or professional learning, or other evidence-informed approaches as a basis for effective practice

V5: Collaborate with others to enhance practice

Approach 3: Strategic Alignment – The 3-Lens Model (Pedagogic, Equity, Feasibility)

Mapped to PSF:

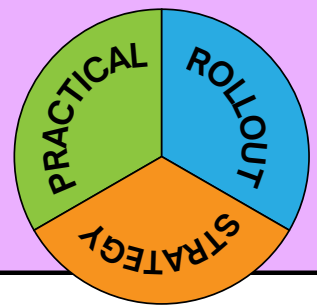
A5: enhance practice through own continuing professional development

K1: how learners learn, generally and within specific subjects

K2: approaches to teaching and/or supporting learning, appropriate for subjects and level of study

V4: Respond to the wider context in which higher education operates, recognising implications for practice

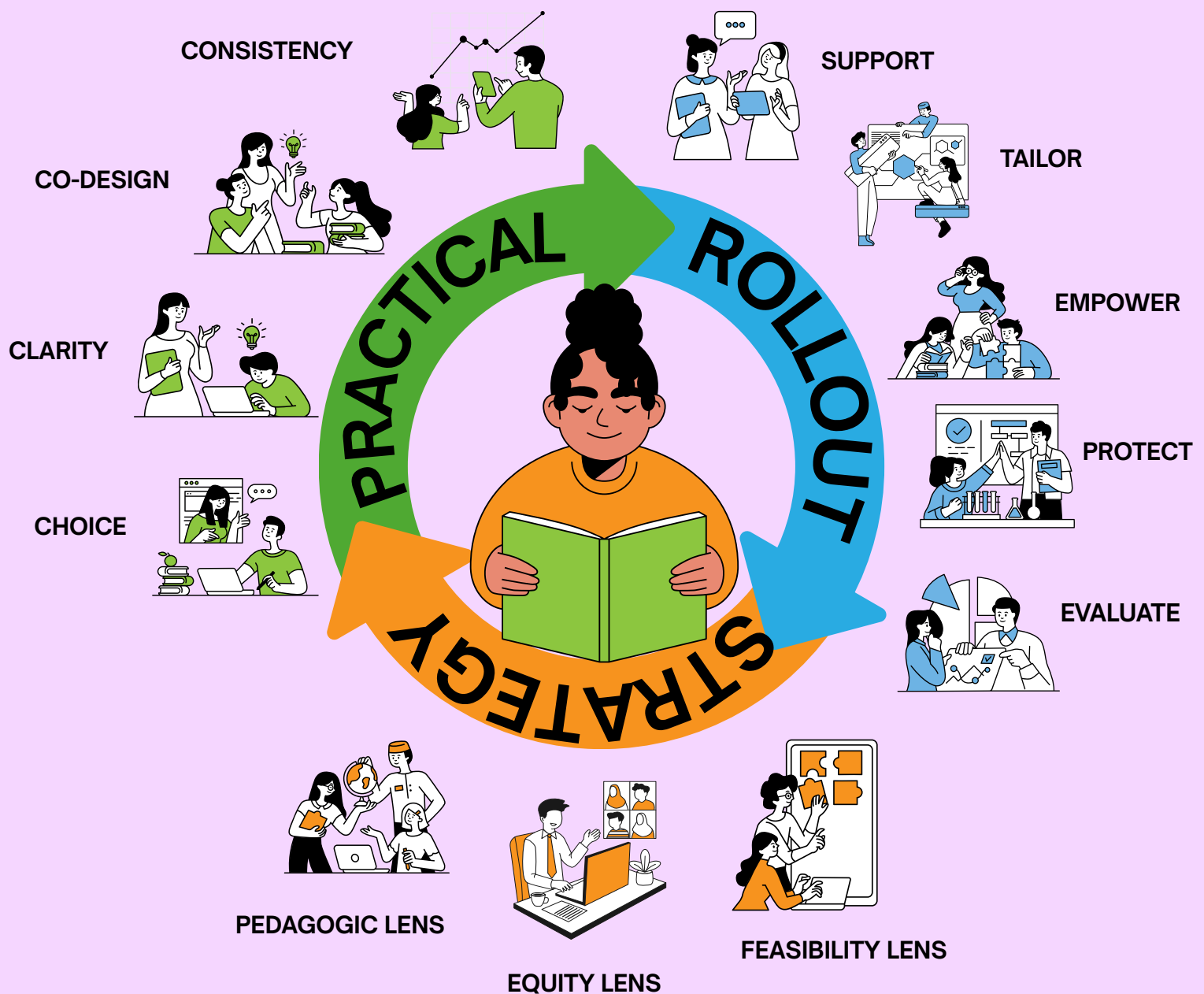
ALIGNMENT TO PSF (2023 EDITION)



Summary of alignment

Framework Part	PSF Primary Focus Areas
Practical Design	A1, A3, K4, K5, V1, V2
Rollout	A2, A4, K3, V3, V5
Strategic Alignment	A5, K1, K2, V4

FRAMEWORK FOR FLEXIBLE ASSESSMENT



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FRAMEWORK FOR FLEXIBLE ASSESSMENT

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AdvanceHE & QAA

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This framework has been co-developed by a diverse and multi-institutional group of 53 contributors representing 17 universities and national sector bodies. Contributors span academic, professional, and leadership roles, ensuring perspectives from curriculum design, digital education, quality assurance, and subject-specific assessment practice. This balance demonstrates a collaborative, sector-wide approach to shaping flexible assessment for different disciplines and institutional contexts.

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