

GUIDELINES FOR USING TEST CENTRE IN ASSESSMENT

These guidelines are part of a **risk management strategy** to ensure that CSU is able to comply with its responsibilities around assessment and in providing a positive learning experience for its students. It is important that the available online assessment technology is used responsibly for the assessment purposes for which it was designed.

What is Test Centre?

Test Centre is a tool that is part of CSU's online learning environment, *CSU Interact*. Test Centre is designed to be used for the creation and administration of a range of typical assessment tasks and surveys. Test Centre is part of the Sakai framework of online tools and is a rapidly developing software.

For use in formative assessment only

In the first stage release Test Centre has been approved by the OLE Programme Steering Committee for use in formative assessment only. In the interests of risk management **Test Centre is not being recommended for summative assessment** (especially not for exams and major tests). Although the software itself is reliable the system is not designed for large scale DE/internal tests/exams.

What can Test Centre be used for?

Test Centre can be used for a variety of **formative assessment** activities ranging from self-assessment revision exercises to surveys and Tasks. Test Centre supports the following objective question types: Multiple Choice ,True/False, Fill In The Blank, Matching. It also supports text input questions such as short answer/essay types, Surveys and Tasks. A Task is a notification of something students need to complete that is not necessarily online e.g. attend a lab. session, do a forum posting or oral presentation. Test Centre can be used to develop interactive learning activities whereby students can teach themselves e.g. by linking to an online simulation program or by developing banks of images and terminology.

You can apply a range of settings, including allowing more than one attempt, setting a time limit, allowing/disallowing questions to be returned to later, giving feedback and/or hints, showing correct answers for feedback, selecting a number of questions at random from a pool of questions (so that each student or each attempt is likely to be different).

Responsibility of academic staff in online assessment

Staff should take into account the following considerations when designing any formative online assessment activity:

Design assessment in accordance with CSU Assessment Policy (see copy below); be familiar with the capabilities of the technology and how to ensure that assessment exercises etc. are set up correctly to enable student access when required; be aware of user unfamiliarity with the technology. Consider the file sizes of images, audio or video used and be aware of the variations students may have with respect to download speeds. Think about the amount of time students may be expected to spend online etc.

Limitations of online systems

Consider possible server downtime, timezone differences when dealing with overseas cohorts, time delays between servers that may affect test submission and idiosyncrasies of the software itself.

Students with disabilities

As with all the sharing of learning resources and design of assessment, staff need to be aware of those students with disabilities and those who have identified specific needs in accessibility issues related to the use of technology.

- Test Centre is not easy to use for students using certain assistive technologies so alternative tasks or formats might need to be considered where students have identified their position.
- Contact Student Services for assistance in planning for students who have identified an accessibility issue in accessing online activities.

Put risk management plans in place

All formative assessment tasks should be an integral part of the subject design and learning experience. Careful design and setting up of the Test Centre assessment activity will ensure students can access the task/activity when required.

Support available to staff for using online assessment technology

- Learning and Teaching Services (LTS) offers support via the educational designers (EDs) around the design of assessment tasks and professional development in learning how to use Test Centre.
- Division of Information Technology provides IT Service Desk support around technical difficulties associated with the technology (logging on, access etc.). Most issues to do with specific test access by an individual student should be directed to the subject coordinator in the first instance as these are most likely test settings issues.

Support available to students using online assessment technology

There will initially be limited support for students in the use of Test Centre. Online Help resources will be made available where possible and staff can access PD whereby they can assist their students. For technical issues (logging on, access to sites etc.) students should contact the IT Service Desk. Contact Student Services for assistance in planning for students with disabilities who might have difficulty accessing online assessment activities.

1. ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the process of ascribing value to the outcome of any work that a student undertakes whilst engaged in a course of studies.

A single assessment task may be formative and/or summative.

It is formative when it includes the intent to enhance student learning, and optimise learning outcomes. Examples may include: self evaluation exercises, multiple choice and true/false quizzes, participation in tutorials, forums and discussions. Feedback plays a significant role here, allowing students to improve their knowledge and skills. The intent rather than the task is the determinant of the formative aspect of assessment.

It is summative when it affects a final grade in a subject. Examples include: examinations, essays, reports, presentations, assignments and practical performance. Summative assessment may include formative components and assessment of affective as well as cognitive outcomes. Summative assessment is often beneficially an extension of formative assessment.

Summative assessment shall not measure skill and/or understandings that are not pre-requisites for admission to the University, or not covered in the subject or its pre-requisites.

2. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSESSMENT

The Faculty Board is responsible for deciding the manner in which a subject will be assessed, including whether or not a final examination will be conducted in the subject. The Faculty Assessment Committee of the Faculty Board is responsible for awarding a grade to students enrolled in a subject.

The OLE Programme Steering committee approved the following recommendations from the Test Centre Pilot:

- *“That Test Centre, Mneme version 1.2 (released December 2008), be made available as an elective tool in CSU Interact in 2009 for use in predominantly formative assessment situations*
- *That users of Test Centre be made aware that this tool and associated support systems are not yet able to support online exams and major summative assessment tasks in a risk-free way....*
- *That Test Centre be released in 2009 in a **staged implementation***
- *That OASIS be kept running for staff and students until such time as Test Centre has equivalent reporting functionality as OASIS, and issues associated with rolling over assessment tasks from OASIS to Test Centre have been addressed - review July 2009 (dependent on developers’ Mneme upgrades scheduled for later 2009)...”*

(Test Centre Pilot Final Report November 2008)