

Improve your students' **performance** in 90 minutes!



Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange
The Centre for Excellence in Assessment at the Business School



Do you feel that your students are underperforming due to their poor understanding of your assessment standards?

Are you concerned that they don't really understand your assessment criteria?

Have you ever experienced blank looks when students read your feedback comments on their work?

If so, why don't you try our pre-assessment intervention?

It takes just 90 minutes of your time, and it works* ...

*Business School students at Oxford Brookes University who completed the intervention showed significant improvements in performance, with improvements sustained at a similar level one year later (Rust et al., 2003).

...here's how you do it

1

Working with first-year students prior to hand-in of any assessed work:

- provide students with two sample assignments (one good, one mediocre) plus mark sheets (including assessment criteria and grade definitions). The assignments should be on similar topics, but not the same topic, as the coursework
- ask students to individually mark the assignments in their own time, and to complete the mark sheets, providing a grade, marks and feedback for each assignment
- invite students to attend a 90-minute workshop one week after doing this work.

2

Structure your workshop in this way:

- working in small groups, students discuss individual marking of sample assignments and agree a group grade and rationale
- small groups feed back to plenary their agreed grades and rationale
- tutor compares small-group rationales with the assessment criteria
- tutor explains each criterion
- small groups review their assessments and grades in light of tutor explanation
- final report from small groups to plenary of their agreed grade for each sample assignment
- tutor provides annotated and marked versions of sample assignments, and discusses tutor assessment and mark.

3

Three weeks later, students submit their coursework plus a self-assessment of their work using the mark sheet

NB: Make sure you use the same mark sheets throughout.

ASKe (Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange) is a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) based in the Business School at Oxford Brookes University. It was set up in summer 2005 with a £4.5 million award from HEFCE in recognition of good practice based on pedagogic research into aspects of assessment.

The work of ASKe has been organised into three strands of activity

Strand 1: Replicating proven practice through:

- A pre-assessment intervention which the ASKe team has shown to work. A simple intervention such as a marking workshop prior to undertaking an assessed task can significantly increase students' understanding of the assessment criteria and improve their performance of the task. ASKe has supported the development of this kind of intervention on all Business School programmes, as well as in three other Schools (Built Environment, Health and Social Care, and Westminster Institute of Education). This same support is available for the remaining four Schools plus five partner institutions.
- The Academic Conduct Officer (ACO) system which the ASKe team is further developing, in addition to researching effective ways of encouraging and promoting academic integrity.
- The Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) programme, long used by the Business School, which ASKe has extended across the School. Support is also offered to help at least three other Schools introduce PAL.

Strand 2: Pioneering evidence-based practice

Appropriate development projects will be funded, both within the Business School and across the whole University. Projects will seek out and support ways to develop and enhance assessment practices.

Strand 3: Cultivating a community of practice

The ASKe team has developed a new, £2 million building on Brookes' Wheatley Campus. This provides a physical environment to support student learning outside structured class time, in which staff and students can meet to develop a shared understanding of academic standards.

But it's more than just a building. The ASKe team argues that only a true community of practice will ensure shared understanding, so ASKe (in conjunction with other parties at Brookes) is also developing the social environment necessary to colonise this physical space.

To find out more about ASKe's work, please contact:

Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange

Oxford Brookes University, Business School

Wheatley Campus, Wheatley, Oxford, OX33 1HX

Tel: +44 (0) 1865 485673

Fax: +44 (0) 1865 485830 Email: aske@brookes.ac.uk

www.brookes.ac.uk/aske

