

RESPONSE TO STUDENT CONSULTATION ON Y032 ASSESSMENT AND CONTENT

SUMMARY

This is a response to the consultation on Y032 assessment and content which took place between 25 November and 9 December 2021 on the Access Boards of Studies Student Consultation Forum. The summary of student feedback is at: <https://learn1.open.ac.uk/mod/forumng/view.php?id=25311>

All changes indicated below will be introduced into our new Y034 Psychology and Social Science Access module which is based upon a similar structure to Y032, three blocks, 4 TMAs etc., but will be Psychology and Social Science content focused. We expect Y034 to have its first presentation in 2023E (May start).

The introduction of alternative mediums of assessment will be introduced to the Y034 assessment material by the module team but it will be optional, and the team will be mindful of inclusivity.

Y034 module team will use several forum types to aid student engagement and will include a forum task as part of early assessment.

TMAs 01 and 02 for Y034 will be short and contain optionality and we will maintain essay type questions for TMA 03 and TMA 04 (emTMA).

Quizzes at the end of each unit will be introduced, online quizzes for Blocks 2 and 3, and book based for Block 1.

FULL RESPONSE

Q1: Thinking about assessment, if you could choose alternative mediums of delivery (for example a written task could also be delivered using video, a 1:1 live discussion, a visual (like PowerPoint), would this appeal and what would you select and why?

Viewed by 66	30 posts	23 students
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You said

12 students stated that written assignments would be their preference, 3 said they would use PowerPoint and 3 said they would consider other mediums but didn't state a preference.

10 students said that they would definitely not want to do a live 1:1 discussion or a video. Several students mentioned social anxiety and that if they were required to do a live discussion or video they would not do the course at all.

Some students mentioned that it was important that assessment prepared them for the requirements on future modules and for this reason, written assignments would be their first choice. However, students also recognised that an alternative medium might work better for some people, particularly as a reasonable adjustment, and therefore choice was a good idea.

OU response

Although we recognise students prefer written tasks, we are currently considering optionality in terms of alternative assessment tasks within our new Y034 module. Tasks we are considering are producing a video, producing a poster and some peer review work. When considering alternative mediums of delivery, we are mindful of the need to make things accessible for our students with non-specific learning difficulties and those using alternative formats. When introducing a new medium, we will teach students who choose to engage with that mode of assessment how to work with the medium so that the task is focused on knowledge, thinking and communication, not an ability to excel at that format.

Q2: How did you benefit from forum activities? Did you prefer discussion contained in the module, on the module wide forum or your tutor group forum? Can you say something about why you felt this way?

Viewed by 67	27 posts	19 students
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You said

5 students stated that they found the forums useful and this was largely as a place to share ideas and learn from others. However, 4 students said that they didn't use them at all and 6 students said they did engage with the forums but found them difficult to use. This was due to the large number of posts/threads, the fact that many threads went off topic, it was difficult to find what you were looking for and the number of unread posts became overwhelming if you don't check in frequently.

The majority of students felt that smaller Tutor Group Forums would work better but many said that there was currently no activity on their TGF. Some said that there

OU response

We are considering the way we use forums for Y034 and plan to include inline, cluster and module wide forum activities. We also aim to include a forum-based task as part of at least one assessed task within a TMA with the aim to prepare students moving on to level 1 where many social sciences modules require you to complete a forum-based task as part of assessment. Additionally, we are considering our current student behaviour and data results from Y032 forums to better inform us of what type of activities/discussion points are popular with a view to including in Y034.

was no engagement even from the tutor, so some encouragement would be needed, and others suggested that the module-wide forum drew students away from the TGF so consideration would need to be given as to whether to continue to offer this.

Q3: Thinking about your assessment tasks (TMAs), would several shorter tasks be more attractive than a single academic task (such as essay)?

Viewed by 69	25 posts	20 students
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You said

15 students said that they felt that essay-based assessment was vital to prepare them for study at level 1 and beyond. 5 students said that they liked the idea of several shorter tasks. A few students said that they would like assessment to be essay-based but with shorter essays gradually building up to a longer piece of academic writing.

A number of students who have completed Access and progressed to level 1 study said that the current assessment tasks on Y032 had prepared them really well for their level 1 module. However, 2 students said that they felt a mixture of assessment tasks would allow them to experience other types of assessment that might be used on higher level modules.

OU response

As well as including some optionality in some parts of TMAs, as per our response to Question 1, TMAs 01 and 02 will be aimed at developing academic writing and will be made up of short tasks. TMA 03 and 04 will still be essay based tasks which will give students a chance to develop their essay writing skills in preparation for level 1. Essays may vary in length, with a reduced essay length before the longer final assessment.

Q4: If there were quizzes at the end of each unit or prior to an assignment – would you find these useful and would you feel more confident starting a TMA after completing a non-assessed test on the material?

Viewed by 72	22 posts	20 students
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You said

100% of the students who responded to this question thought that regular non-assessed quizzes were a good idea. Students felt that this would help them check their understanding of the material and give them confidence prior to a TMA. Some students mentioned that there are already iCMAs and “test your knowledge” sections in the material so consideration would need to be given to whether the quizzes would replace or be in addition to these. It was also suggested that iCMA deadlines should fall in line with the units they relate to, rather than being all at the end of the module.

OU response

We will be including end of unit quizzes for Y034 which aims to test a student’s understanding. These will be interactive quizzes for online Blocks 2 and 3 and paper based for the Block 1 book.