What is TESTA?

Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment (TESTA) was established as part of a National Teaching Fellowship project, originally funded by the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Widely employed in UK higher education institutions already, the TESTA approach enables staff to identify and analyse assessment and feedback practices experienced by a student across an entire degree programme. The University of Aberdeen introduced TESTA in 2022.

What are TESTA’s aims?

The University and its academic Schools are aiming to share effective practice, increase efficiency, and enhance student and staff experiences. To achieve these aims, assessment and feedback practices across selected degree programmes will be reviewed using established TESTA methodologies.

How does it work?

The TESTA process includes four key stages:

1. **Programmatic review**: Conducting a review of courses across a degree programme to gather information on assessment and feedback practices.
2. **Student data collection**: Collecting data on student experiences of assessment and feedback practices across a degree programme.
3. **Written review**: Analysing and recording gathered information in individual reports to reflect on assessment and feedback practices across a degree programme.
4. **Action plan**: Meeting as a degree programme team to agree any assessment and feedback enhancements, with a view to eventual impact evaluation.
What are the benefits of TESTA?

For staff, these may include:

• Broadening approaches to their assessment and feedback practices.

• Enhancing understanding of assessment design.

• Developing awareness of a variety of feedback approaches.

• Identifying areas of over-assessment that could reduce staff workload.

• Engaging in opportunities for interdisciplinary exchange and discussion

For students, these may include:

• Encouraging students’ deep-learning and understanding of assessment literacy.

• Enhancing student knowledge and understanding of the value of feedback in learning.

• Increasing student engagement through more varied assessment and feedback approaches.

• Identifying areas of over-assessment that could reduce student workload.

For more information about TESTA at the University of Aberdeen, please contact the Centre for Academic Development at testa@abdn.ac.uk.

Centre for Academic Development, August 2023