

Project Title:

Shaping innovative assessment: a student- staff collaborative initiative for the BSc in Humanities, Philosophy & Law

Lead Staff partner:

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E-Mail:

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Telephone:

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Faculty:

Medicine

Department:

Department of Medicine

Additional Staff Partners:

N/A

Proposed number of Student partners:

3

Duration of Project:

7.5 working days (60 hours)

Total fund requested:

£1372.50

Costings breakdown:

1.5 weeks per student, £457.50 per student (X3, £1372.50)

Rationale for project (e.g. from Student feedback, liaison with the Academic Rep Network, curriculum review outcomes, industry input)

The curriculum review has prompted a dramatic revision of assessment across all the BScs offered by the School of Medicine. The BSc in Medical Sciences with Humanities, Philosophy of Law BSc (HPL) combines methods and pedagogy from both the scientific and humanities paradigms. Conforming with the programme specification whilst still providing appropriate in-course assignments that are stimulating and enhance learning gain is a particular challenge. Traditionally, staff members are entirely responsible for devising assessments, choosing the material to be assessed, writing the brief for students, and determining the marking domains. The risk, especially with new assessments, is that there will be a dissonance between what staff anticipate that students will interpret from the brief and how students actually approach and interpret the assignment. In HPL, there is a real emphasis on creativity, both in the content of the course and the pedagogical style. We are keen to carry this creativity through to the assessments where we would like to be imaginative and innovative. By recruiting student partners to collaborate in assessment design, from the wording of the assignment to the beta-testing of it by producing an example that future students will find useful, we can maximise the success of the assignment process, and gain valuable insights into the perspectives of students on assessment design. Students would also collaborate on devising the best way of developing formative assessments, and work out how best to facilitate group working (a specified requirement for one of the assignments).

Project outline, including how an authentic staff-student partnership will be adopted and how the work aligns with the Learning and Teaching Strategy

The BSc Year for medical students at Imperial has the advantage of a ready pool of students who have completed the HPL BSc, so have the necessary subject-specific expertise, and they are still enrolled at Imperial for a further two years for their medical degrees, making them eligible to participate in StudentShapers. There are no conflicts of interest because students recruited to StudentShapers for this project are no longer being assessed by the HPL course team. One of the key challenges of the Learning and Teaching Strategy is that assessment should be innovative. Yet innovative assessment risks alienating students who feel that they are being treated as 'guinea pigs', especially in the first year of new assessment when there are no exemplars. Staff may not have not successfully anticipated how the assignment will be approached and executed. This is a particular problem in the HPL course in which students are already working in an unfamiliar paradigm. We will be designing three new, highly innovative assignments for the HPL BSc. We have a framework from the programme specification, but the individual questions have yet to be devised. To give a sense of the innovation involved, one assignment will take the form of a graphic novel, one will be a multidisciplinary group poster presentation, and one will be a narrative clinical case study. It is envisaged that the project will consist of four meetings between the student partners and the course team at which the assignments will be 'workshopped' leading to a draft brief for each assignment. The students will then have a chance to complete the assignments, including working as a team of three to test the group work. They will report back on logistics (e.g. how easy it is to access sources, time spent on various aspects of the brief, etc.). Staff and students will then both be involved in marking the assignment in order to explore the appropriateness of the draft marking criteria. On the basis of this work, the assignment briefs will be revised to produce improved versions. This approach values the mutual expertise of staff in setting assignments and the students in interpreting assignment briefs and undertaking the work. Partnerships will be advertised to all eligible students (those that have completed the HPL BSc and are still enrolled at Imperial), not merely those that are highly achieving. It is

proposed to have a light-touch recruitment process in which students provide brief statements of what they feel they can bring to the project and confirm their availability on scheduled dates. The process will be truly collaborative with a meaningful dialogue taking place. The questions will not have been decided in advance with staff merely seeking approval.

Projected outcomes and benefits for both the department and student experience and how long-term impact will be sustained

Outcomes and long-term impact include:

- Thoroughly well-thought-out and tested assignment briefs that are commensurate with maximising learning gain, and have sufficient scope and nuance to be able to discriminate between different categories of achievement. This will benefit all future students that enrol on the course. Assessment design is always an iterative process, but this will ensure that assignments are 'road-tested' and robust for the first year of roll-out.
- Examples of completed assignments on comparable subject matter that will serve as exemplars for students without merely being 'model answers' (i.e. they will feature different health issues, be based on different patient stories, and draw on a unique set of qualitative data, but the format and assignment process will be the same).

Proposed Method of Progress checking/update: (include whether this will come from multiple sources, student/staff partners, event-based feedback from stakeholders etc.)

During the project, progress will be checked by adherence to a schedule of meetings and expected completion dates. In the longer term, participants in StudentShapers will be invited to contribute to assignment workshops in the next iteration of the course to offer actively offer students assistance and advice. The work undertaken here will form the foundation for ongoing attention to student feedback in the dynamic process of improving the value of assessment.

Projected outcomes/benefits for both staff and student partners on the project

Benefits for staff and student partners on the project:

- The process of collaboration will be very insightful for both the staff and the students involved. We will all be able to better appreciate each other's points of view, and aspects of assessment that are usually taken-for-granted by both sides may come to light and be challenged.
- Students will be able to put their involvement in this project forward as part of an application for Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.
- Students involved will have the opportunity to extend the learning from which they will already have benefited on the HPL course to new domains. We do often have requests from past students to continue to be involved so we know there is an appetite for continuing personal and professional development in the medical humanities.
- There may be the opportunity to showcase this work as a case study in collaborative education through conference presentations.