

Make the most of the professional framework

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A core aim of the Institute of Educational Assessors is to improve the quality of educational assessment by developing the skills, capability and knowledge of those involved. In the first of a three-part series on putting the professional framework into practice we look at how a head of department would use it to perform effectively

INSIDE THE FRAMEWORK

The professional framework illustrates the assessment functions required by three groups of roles: fellows, members and associates.

We have pulled out a third of the framework to show how it applies to teachers like Anna.

The framework can be best understood by beginning at the top left-hand corner and moving to the right, looking at the five purposes behind each activity.

Sections A,B and C outline the activities surrounding assessment, whereas sections D and E outline the personal and interpersonal skills of individuals carrying out effective assessment.

The functions of assessment are broken down into separate sub-functions within the stages needed to execute effective assessment. The subsequent cells highlight the actions that are required to perform effectively at different roles. A blank shows that no activity will take place at the level performing that function.

Since its inception, the institute has been working in collaboration with the awarding bodies to identify those activities that lead to good assessment practice. An outline framework of competencies has been developed based on the activities carried out by assessors at all levels.

The IEA website (details below) features the framework in full. The framework describes the different roles in assessment from senior roles involved in setting specifications and developing assessment policy to more junior roles involved with carrying out assessment activities.

Within the main body of the framework these roles are matched up to the relevant activities. The framework explains the processes involved, the self development activities required, and how to manage and work with others.

The website enables individuals to identify their role in assessment and to check which activities he or she should be delivering. The full framework also helps assessors to determine which activities have to be done to perform at a higher level.

To show how the framework will operate in practice we will look at the work of Anna over the course of an assessment cycle. Anna is head of department in a large comprehensive and acts as a team leader for a major awarding body.

Weblink

To find out how this framework can help you to become an effective assessor, visit the IEA website at www.ioea.org.uk

Putting the framework into practice: a teacher's story

Anna will follow five stages in the assessment cycle

1 Preparing for assessment

As a head of department, Anna will prepare for assessment by ensuring that all coursework tasks in her school comply with the specification set out by the awarding body. She will do this by convening a meeting of all her subject staff and determining which aspects of the specification are being met by each member of the department and the types of tasks these will generate for individual students (A2 and A3). If she has a new member of staff, she may train that individual in the process of setting appropriate coursework tasks, particularly if that member of department is a newly qualified teacher (A4).

2 Conducting assessment

Anna will conduct assessments by ensuring that all team members understand the mark scheme (B1). She will do this at an internal standardising meeting by using exemplar materials. She will ensure that the entire assessment team understands the mark scheme before an assessment (B2).

Once material has been assessed Anna will assess a quota of candidates' work in accordance with the assessment criteria or mark scheme against standardisation materials (B3). She will then scrutinise the marking of all team members by taking samples from across grade boundaries and looking for any inconsistencies (B4). She may ask for a sample of coursework marks in her centre to monitor that the standards are being applied appropriately (B5).

3 Awarding and reporting

Following the assessments, Anna will convene a review meeting as required and assist department members by recommending the appropriate grades for given marks

at the meeting (C1). She will evaluate the performances of her department and feedback to them individually (C2).

She will report back to her learners (C3) and suggest ways in which her department can provide feedback to their own learners.

4 Performing effectively

To ensure that all of this has taken place efficiently, Anna will have planned all of these activities beforehand and made time to fulfil her obligations (D1). She will have gained feedback from staff and applied any lessons learned from previous activities to her own performance (D2). She will keep up-to-date by reviewing any changes to specifications or to exemplar materials and inform all of her staff (D3).

5 Working with others

Anna ensures that all staff in her centre are briefed about the requirements, the procedures and how to apply the assessment criteria, making sure that all her team is effective (E1).

At meetings she will monitor samples and highlight any inconsistencies in assessment, helping all her team members to improve their standards (E2). She will give clear and appropriate reports to staff in her centre, both formally through written reports and informally in electronic communications, telephone and direct conversations (E3).

Whenever change occurs to specifications, she will immediately inform the staff for whom she is responsible and assist in their interpretation of the specification as well as the appropriate criteria to apply to the new situation (E4).

AN OUTLINE PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATIONAL ASSESSORS

PURPOSE	A PREPARING FOR ASSESSMENT				B CONDUCTING ASSESSMENTS						C FEEDING BACK ON ASSESSMENT				D PERFORMING EFFECTIVELY			E MANAGING AND WORKING WITH OTHERS					
	Design assessments and mark schemes				Conduct assessments and assess outcomes						Make awards and evaluate performance				Manage self and personal knowledge and skills			Develop and manage assessment teams and interact with others					
SCOPE	A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5		B6	C1	C2	C3	C4	D1	D2	D3	E1	E2	E3	E4	
ASSESSMENT FUNCTIONS	Design the assessment specification	Interpret assessment requirements of the specification	Design the assessment instrument and criteria	Advise and train assessors	Agree application of the assessment criteria	Agree application of assessment tasks and mark scheme in the centre	Assess learners' outcomes	Ensure consistency of assessment	Select samples of work for moderation		Standardise assessments across the specification	Determine grade/level thresholds	Evaluate performance	Provide feedback to learners and centres	Provide reports and give feedback to assessment teams	Identify requirements, plan and organise self	Reflect on performance and use feedback	Undertake personal development	Develop teams	Train and support others	Work with others	Facilitate change	
ROLE	MEMBER For example: Team leader (E) Team leader (M) Coursework adviser Subject leader Chartered assessor	Set assessment tasks Supervise Coach/train Assess Advise	Interpret the assessment requirements of the specification for the centre	Set assessment tasks, adapt the assessment criteria and identify or develop exemplars	Advise and train assessors and centres on task setting	Ensure that assessment team members understand the assessment criteria	Ensure that team members understand the assessment task and criteria	Assess a quota of learners' work in accordance with the assessment criteria and procedures	Scrutinise the marking standards of assessment within the team or centre and provide feedback	Select and moderate appropriate samples of work		Assist as required with standardising marks	Assist with marking reviews as required	Assist in evaluating performance of the assessment as required	Provide/ check reports for learners and centres	Provide/ check reports and give feedback to assessors and learners as appropriate	Plan and undertake assessment activities to required procedures and deadlines	Identify and plan for improvement in own performance	Use appropriate resources to meet development goals and enhance performance	Develop, manage and retain an effective assessment team	Encourage and help assessors to improve their performance	Communicate effectively to set and fulfil agreed commitments	Embrace and effect change within the assessment team