

Outcomes of the Consultation Paper to Consider the Timing and Nature of Referral Assessments

The consultation paper was sent to Associate Deans (Education) and Heads of Service for dissemination. There were 107 responses received by the deadline. Respondents included School Directors, Subject Leaders, Programme Leaders, Professors, Senior Lecturers and Professional Service Colleagues. Quantitative and sample qualitative data are provided for consideration by Education Committee.

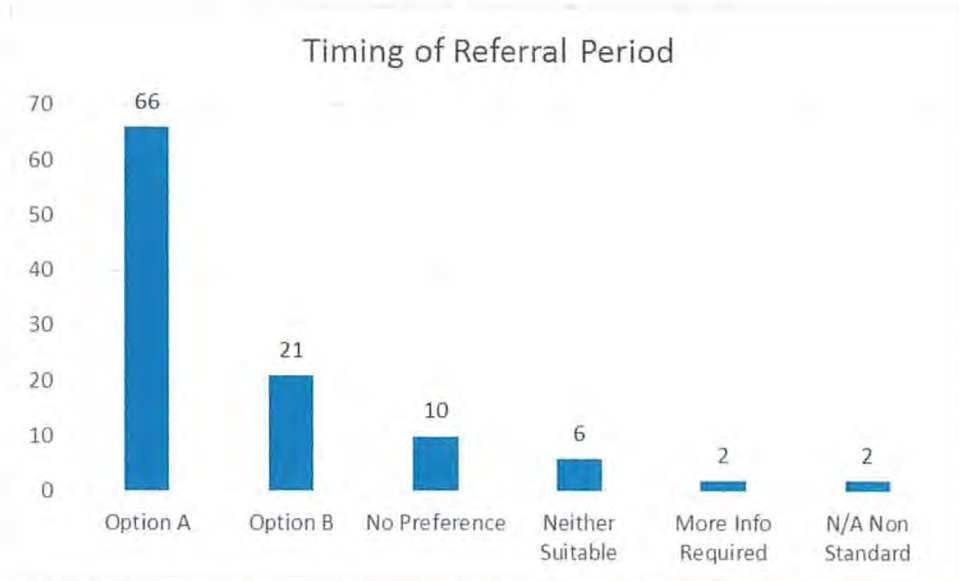
Key Outcomes

Question		
Timing of Referral Period	Option A – Week prior to graduation (66 respondents)	Option B – Week of graduation (21 respondents)
Single Referral Assessment for Referral	Yes (45 respondents)	No (52 respondents)
Reduction of Assessment by Examination	Yes (40 respondents)	No (48 respondents)
Summer School Provision	Yes (40 respondents)	No (55 respondents)

Recommendations

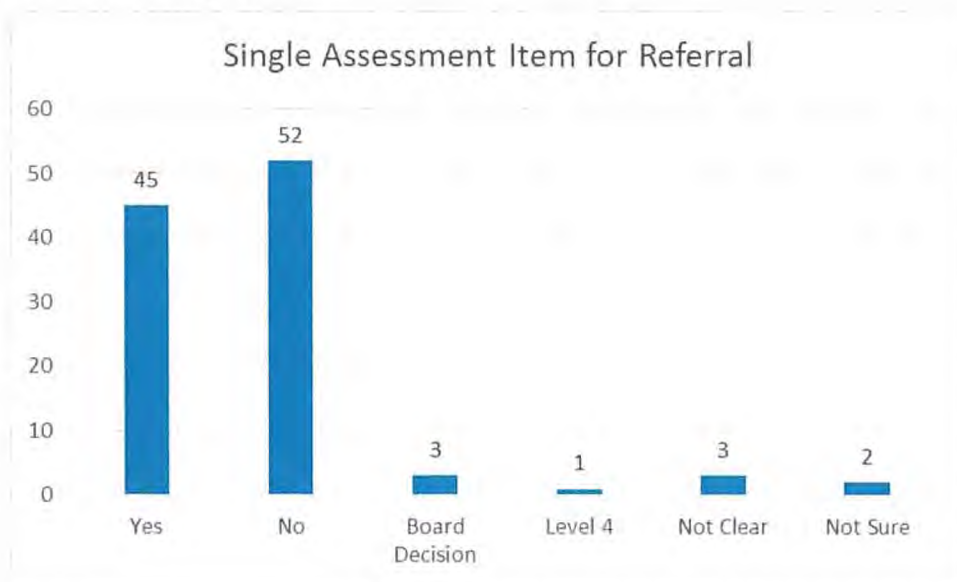
- 1) To consider the following issues raised by Student Administrative Services in support of the proposals:
 - Earlier release of results and more meaningful feedback allowing students to fully consider their options before the start of the new academic year
 - Student record adjustments to have taken place in a timely manner before students return
 - More timely information processing to the Student Loans Company, allowing student maintenance loans to be available on time and queries resolved before the new academic year begins
 - An appeals process that can consider appeals before the new academic year is underway
 - Would enable an amendment to the student registration process negating the need for students with September/October completion dates to register at all.
 - Students could delay signing accommodation contracts until results are known.
- 2) To consider the following issues raised by Academic Planning & Information Services:
 - The logistics of producing a timetable and holding examinations in July alongside preparation for graduation – resource implications.
- 3) Summer School:
 - Qualitative comments suggest that staff were unclear about the length and nature of the summer school and this may have influenced the response. Therefore, further detail and consultation may be helpful.
- 4) Faculty Administrative Colleagues:
 - It should be noted that there were no responses from Faculty administrative colleagues and it is necessary to capture the views of this group.

Question 1: Timing of Assessments



Positive Comments Option A
<p>I have external examined at Huddersfield University who operate a much earlier referral system than we have here at LJMU I feel that an earlier submission referral date will benefit students as it means that they can focus on their resit work and get support from staff and not be lost in the system. For students with PMCs this may need some thought to ensure equality.</p>
<p>Referrals earlier than the current status quo allows students in this situation to make earlier decisions about accommodation contract renewals etc. Pedagogically, option A may lead to students staying attached in the run up to referrals and puts clear water between end of academic year and start of new with potential for staff to get on with research, attend early September conferences etc.</p>
<p>Student Advice and Well Being: Accommodation contracts with partner providers end on the 7th July – this therefore fits perfectly with ensuring students still have access to accommodation.</p>
<p>Logistically easier but will require earlier notification to students - not of finalised results, but unmoderated exam marks etc., so students will be aware prior to formal results notification that they are likely to be required to take referrals/deferrals.</p>

Question 2: Do you support the development of a **single referral assessment item**? Please provide comments, as appropriate



Positive Comments Single Referral Task

would reduce the time needed for invigilation and as long as the LOs are being met it doesn't really matter whether its coursework or exam but having coursework would go some way to reducing test anxiety

In principle, this is a good idea. However, there is some challenges associated with this including with modules which are inter- / multi-disciplinary in nature. Within Science and Football there are modules which are a combination of a range of different disciplines (e.g., biomechanics and performance analysis), so to have a single piece of work would cause challenges in terms of making sure all learning outcomes were covered.

Yes, but the issue of multiple re-assessment items is symptomatic of modules with multiple assessment items. There is a wider point here about curriculum and assessment design which may be veiled by the imposition of a single re-assessment item. Addressing the cause may be more beneficial than addressing the symptom.

I am broadly in support of this on the basis that all LO's are able to be assessed in the single assessment. The concern I have is what happens to deferred students. Will they still be required to undertake the original assessment items, not to do so would unfairly advantage them. There is a workload issue here also.

Neither Options Suitable

Neither of these seems strategic. Given that students learn of results on 19 June, students who will enrol in referrals will have less than 1 month to complete this work. Moreover, if they have committed to jobs or summer placements, will this not interfere with otherwise well planned commitments that bolster employability?

Moving referral assessments from the current date of mid-August, to July means students will have much less time to complete referral work. Results notification day is 19 June, so those failing a module have only 3 weeks to complete new referral work. This does not seem to be much time for students, especially those failing more than one module, to catch up on content they missed and revise areas of misunderstanding to do better than they did just 3 weeks previously.

Given that many students return home after May exams and are not local to Liverpool, that the majority of students work full-time during the summer and that some students schedule work placements during July, scheduled focused support at this time might not target those students who need it most. Currently referral/deferral students who require support, contact module leaders for individualised (and thus from the students' perspective, more helpful) advice and support.

Moving referral assessments from the current date of mid-August, to July means students will have much less time to complete referral work.

Not convinced that either of these are ideal. The turnaround for this relative to results notification is tight, assuming RND is 19 June, giving little time for serious preparation.

Negative Comments Single Referral Task

No, can't see how this will work in terms of covering all learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are mutually exclusive and this is why we have a diet of varied assessment to hit these LOs. The likelihood of identifying a single universal assessment that can hit all bases is deeply problematic and pedagogically unsound

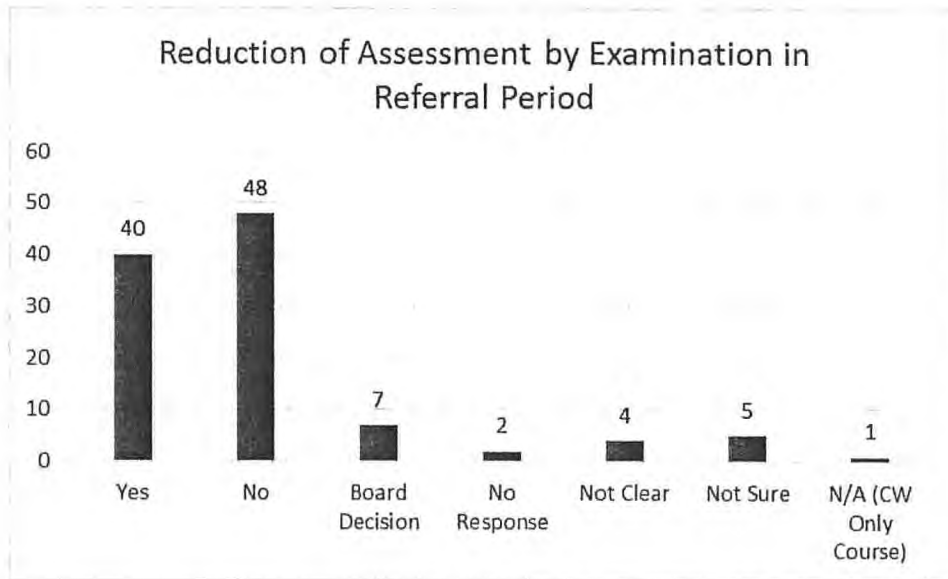
I am not in favour of a single referral assessment item as students who failed both assignments would have an advantage over students who failed only one assignment.

I don't really see why there needs to be a single referral assessment item. Our programme has a number of different assessment items throughout the programme and they could not all be reassessed using the same method. I agree that unseen exams can result in more failures so can see the benefit of reducing the number of those. The other option could be that, as they failed the piece of assessment that had been designed by the module team as the most effective way to assess the work can referrals not be resubmissions of the original piece with highlighted amendments? (this is only a thought and would need working through but it would offer a solution to devising new items when the original was designed that way for a reason)

No- I don't favour a single referral assessment because I don't feel that there is one assessment that would be able to include all the learning outcomes.

I will only welcome a single referral item if it includes the LA and LO of the module and is equivalent in length and scope to the original work. I don't think it's right or fair on these students (and other students) to dilute assessments. There is a danger that students would at L4 might strategically opt not to do first sits and wait for easier referral work.

Question 3: Do you support the reduction of written, unseen examinations in favour of course work? Please provide comments, as appropriate.



Positive Comments reduction in Examinations

Yes – this makes the assessment much less complex and also means that those referred would have to meet ALL the Learning Outcomes, even if they had, perhaps, narrowly passed some.

Yes – most Learning Outcomes can be met by coursework and setting a specific date for exams can provide problems for students as they juggle summer jobs, family responsibilities, etcetera.

I support the reduction of written, unseen examinations in favour of coursework.

I strongly support the reduction of examinations in favour of coursework. I believe this would support a wider range of students.

Negative Comments reduction in Examinations

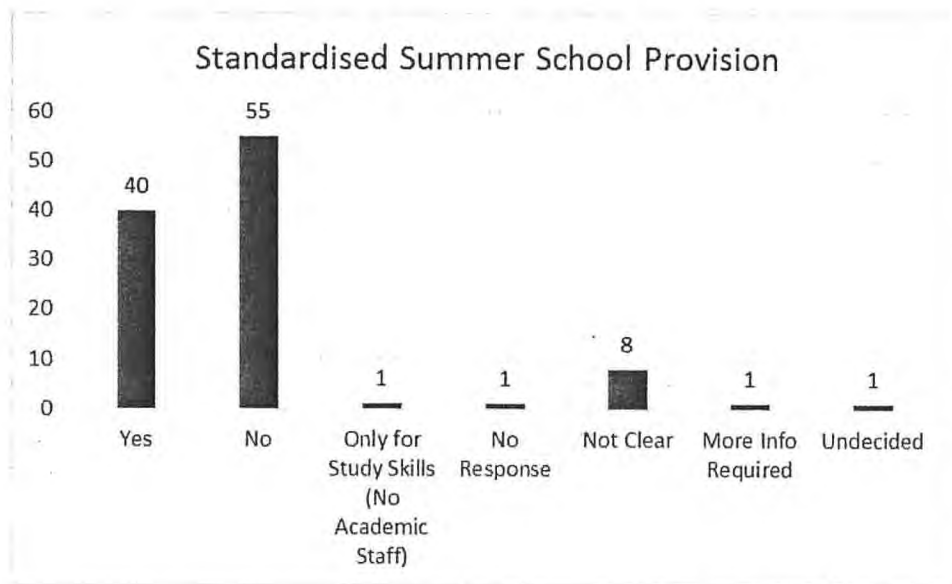
No – written examinations remain the most secure method of ensuring that the work is that of the student and not a third party. It is essential to the maintenance of academic standards that students' understanding and knowledge are properly assessed.

NO: Exams happen on one day. Coursework requires several weeks writing time. Exams are difficult to plagiarise and with proper monitoring, difficult to cheat. It is easier to test across a range of learning outcomes with an exam

NO. The nature of learning outcomes on our modules does not allow effective assessment via coursework alone.

I don't see the point of reducing the exams. Not every module has them (at least in the programme I teach – Geography and Wildlife Conservation), whilst at the same time employers need to see that the students have them. In addition, there is the issue of consistency and fairness as we may be disadvantaging the rest of the cohort.

Question 4: Do you support the provision of a Summer School to students? If you do not support this proposal then please outline why below. Please provide any other comments you wish to make.



Negative Comments

ABSOLUTELY NOT! This scheme will lead to poorer employability among our students

No, this is not a good idea, as it will take more time away from staff. Normally, this period is reserved for research. If we want staff to produce publications, we need to give them the time to do this.

No. In essence I don't think we have the capacity to deliver this without seriously damaging our already very small amount of research time. Also, I doubt whether students who have already attended poorly will suddenly take up the opportunity of extra teaching, nor do I see why they should be entitled to it.

I think the standardisation of summer school activity is not best practice. Module leaders are best placed to determine the form of activity necessary to address the gaps in learning to place students in the best possible position to successfully complete their refer/ defer assessments.

No. Students should focus on achieving the learning outcomes during the normal academic year. By offering a summer school we are at risk of devaluing the core learning, teaching and assessment that we (students and staff, as partners) should dedicate ourselves to achieving in semesters 1&2.

I am not in support of a Summer School as all relevant material is on Bb and students are expected to do considerable amounts of private study. Particularly with coursework which are usually essays, literature reviews or reports students are expected to research the respective topic and produce a coherent piece of work. Training or direct help from our side would be the wrong signal as students have to become independent.