



Overview of TESTA findings at the University of Strathclyde 2016-2018

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Summary of findings

Findings related to feedback

1. Students feel that they don't receive enough feedback
2. Feedback is perceived as slow
3. Feedback is often focused on the specifics of an assignment rather than on how to improve
4. Students sometimes find it difficult to discuss feedback with members of teaching staff
5. Students would like to have test papers returned to them

Findings related to assessment

1. Assessments often encourage rote learning rather than deeper understanding
2. Some assessments are perceived to be irrelevant to students' future careers, and there are concerns about the focus on theory over practice
3. Standards and expectations are not always clear
4. There are mixed feelings about formative and low-stakes assessment

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to TESTA

TESTA (Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment) is an evidence-led approach to understanding assessment and feedback patterns on whole degree programmes. The purpose of TESTA is to help programme teams to identify possible improvements based on evidence and principles of assessment. TESTA uses three methods to gather evidence about the typical assessment and feedback experience of students:

- Programme audit (evidence from module descriptors, MyPlace pages and other paperwork)
- Assessment Experience Questionnaire (based on established assessment principles)
- Focus groups

TESTA has been used across the UK, for more information visit www.testa.ac.uk. It has been used at Strathclyde since 2016. The TESTA lead at Strathclyde is Dr Alex Buckley (alex.buckley@strath.ac.uk).

1.2 Purpose of the report

This report is intended to provide an overview of the common themes that have emerged from TESTA at Strathclyde, drawing on the eight programmes that have participated to date. It is designed to give a sense of the key challenges experienced by Strathclyde students around assessment and feedback, with a particular focus on how assessment and feedback help students to learn.

The focus is intentionally on the challenges experienced by students rather than areas of good practice. It is also important to note that the majority of the participating programmes volunteered due to existing concerns about assessment and feedback, so they are not a representative cross-section of Strathclyde programmes.

This report is based on data from the following eight programmes (three from the Faculty of Science, two each from the Faculty of Science and HaSS, and one from the Business School).

- LLB Hons (Law School)
- MPharm (SIPBS)
- MChem Chemistry (Department of Pure and Applied Chemistry)
- MEng Mechanical Engineering & MEng Aero-Mechanical Engineering (Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering)
- BSc Computer Science and BSc Software Engineering (Department of Computer and Information Sciences)
- BEng/MEng Chemical Engineering (Department of Chemical and Process Engineering)
- BA Primary Education (School of Education)
- MSc Business and Management (Strathclyde Business School)

This report draws on the following data:

- 1567 student responses to the Assessment Experience Questionnaire with predominantly quantitative questions (from a total population of 3257, equivalent to an overall response rate of 48%)
- 113 staff responses to a staff-facing version of the Assessment Experience Questionnaire
- Transcripts from 30 focus groups with 144 student participants
- Assessment audits undertaken with each of the 8 programmes
- Comparisons are made with national TESTA averages based on data from other institutions around the UK

TESTA is a confidential process, therefore this report does not comment on any individual programme and identifying information in students' quotations have been removed.

A limitation of this report is that for reasons of time it draws on the analysis of qualitative data undertaken for the TESTA reports for individual programmes. Transcripts of focus groups were not reanalysed. As a consequence, any themes common across the different programmes but insufficiently prominent in particular programmes will be missed.

2. Overview of findings related to feedback

2.1 Students feel that they don't receive enough feedback

Many students felt that not enough written feedback on assessments was provided. This was a key point of disagreement with academic staff: 30% of students felt that they received hardly any feedback on their work, while only 4% of staff felt the same.

In some cases the feedback was felt to be overly brief, while in others no feedback was provided at all in addition to a mark.

"I think one time I got the feedback on an essay and it was a good grade, it was like a 2:1 but it just said 'Very good essay' [laughter]. I was like, that's not feedback. I can tell from my mark that's it's a very good essay."

Facilitator: "What feedback do you get on your work?"

Student 1: "Zero, this year."

Student 2: "Not much, no."

Student 3: "A mark."

"Very often after writing lengthy papers which are supposed to take 50+ hours to complete you get a sentence or two as feedback. This doesn't really seem like the person marking cares."

"We handed it in and then we just got our percentage. An email sent to us with a percentage. No one said why we got that percentage. Where we lost that mark."

A related concern is that the feedback that is provided is vague or generic, and insufficiently clear for the student to learn how to improve.

"We hardly get any feedback on our assignments and usually it seems very generic as if the marker has copied and pasted the same feedback to a number of students."

2.2 Feedback is perceived as slow

A key message from the quantitative data is that students' feel that written feedback takes too long to arrive. For the four programmes for which the NSS questions were included in the TESTA questionnaire, all had scores considerably lower than the subject-level sector average for the item 'Feedback on my work has been timely': the average difference was 44 percentage points, suggested that the students on these programmes have deep concerns about the timeliness of feedback. This is echoed by the results from the 2017 National Student Survey, which show that for a third of our subject areas (13 out of 39) Strathclyde is statistically significantly worse for that question than the relevant subject-level sector average.

This is also a key area of disagreement between staff and students. 30% of students feel that feedback arrives too late to be useful, while only 12% of staff feel the same. For those programmes where the NSS questions were used in the TESTA questionnaire, 69% of staff felt that feedback has been timely compared with just 29% of students.

Students express disappointment that the deadlines given for the return of feedback are missed.

*"We're all just a bit pissed off because they're so strict with deadlines if you miss it, 2% goes off, 5% goes off. Then, when it's their responsibility to give you stuff back in time, they just say, 'f**k it, we'll give it in two months. There's nothing you can do.' That's probably why we're pissed off at it."*

Student 1: "Sometimes it's two weeks. Next time it's four weeks."

Student 2: "If they'd only stick to the date, it's always after the day or a week after the date. It depends, but sometimes they give us a date and then they're like, 'oh we'll try and get it for the week after that, I promise'."

"Yes, we usually end up sending emails. Then, the people from the student administration end up getting all the shit because they get all our emails. They do apologize but it's not their fault, they can't help it. The lecturers, we never hear from them afterwards. No, they never apologize for it."

Concerns about the speed of feedback are sometimes expressed in terms of disappointment that feedback doesn't arrive to help with subsequent assignments.

"Usually you just wouldn't have the mark back for the last assignment before you get to start the next one. That's quite common."

Students report that slow feedback is less helpful as it is harder to connect the feedback with the original intention behind the work.

"Sometimes feedback takes too long that I can't remember what was going through my head when I answered the questions."

"And then when you get the mark, you don't even remember what it was about, so you can't figure out what you've done wrong."

The questionnaire data suggests that there isn't a perfect correlation between the timeliness of feedback, and the perception that it arrives in time to be useful. A minority of students feel that while the feedback may be timely, it is still too late to help their learning. This was expressed by a small number of students in the focus groups.

Student 1: "When it comes to timeliness, you are you're taking into consideration, that they're having to do so many essays, and they do have other classes to do, and they have lives, and we do understand that. So, I would say, that yes, three weeks is good considering how many they've got, but, three weeks after I've written an essay, I'm..."

Student 2: "I've forgotten."

Student 3: "I'm on to the next thing."

2.3 Feedback is often focused on the specifics of an assignment rather than on how to improve

One of students' main concerns about the helpfulness of feedback for learning is that feedback is often overly focused on the specifics of an assignment, rather than providing guidance about how to approach future work.

Relatedly, students and staff seem to be in profound disagreement about the extent to which students make use of feedback. 80% of students feel that they pay careful attention to feedback,

compared to 37% of staff, and 76% of students say that they use feedback to go back over what they have done in their work, compared to 41% of staff.

“A lot of the feedback that you got on that said, ‘Oh, you did well with this’, but you didn’t really get that constructive feedback, ‘but next time try this.’ I think it’s because they were trying to bang out the feedback every week.”

“It doesn’t provide a great deal of insight into what I need to improve on.”

“I’ve never had feedback on the structure of my essay. One time, I know some people had an essay to do on [subject] and I know people who had more comments on whether or not they started the name of it with a capital letter or not than they actually had on the essay structure.”

“What I would suggest is actually, it’s not feedback. It’s just a justification. Because feedback for me means they want to help you to improve and for me it’s just, ‘Okay, I gave you this mark because you did this, this, this and this,’ but then that’s it. There’s no like, ‘Maybe in the next assignment you should look out for da-da-da to improve yourself.’ I’ve never read that before. What we get is just a justification not feedback.”

The problem of feedback not providing guidance on subsequent assessments is more acute where the variety of assessment formats is higher, making it harder for students to transfer guidance.

“I think sometimes, the feedback’s probably never going to help me, long-term. I’m never going to be doing another assignment the same as that. I think it’s different if you’re doing a subject where you’re doing the same type of essays. There’s such a wide range [of assessment formats] that the chances of you doing the same type of essay... they’re all very different.”

2.4 Students sometimes find it difficult to discuss feedback with members of teaching staff

Students generally perceive opportunities to discuss feedback with teaching staff to depend on the personalities and priorities of individual members of staff. Students feel they have to judge the receptiveness of staff to being asked for additional support, with some seen as friendly and helpful and others seen as cold and distant.

“It was just the way he was helping me, just made me sound like I was stupid ‘cause I didn’t understand something, and it just wasn’t nice. I don’t think anyone should be made to feel like they’re stupid.”

Student 1: “Some of them, they’re quite, I don’t know if it’s just how they are or something like that. They’re quite difficult to talk to. Because when you’ve asked them a question, the way that they then answer the question makes you feel really stupid and stuff like that.”

Student 1: “It’s like, well, ‘you should know this’. I don’t know it, because you didn’t teach us it. And you kind of, you don’t want to ask them questions, because they make you feel like you’re the stupid one for asking the question.”

Student 1: “I e-mailed one of the lecturers to see if I could get my test paper to see where I went wrong on one of the tests we had a couple of weeks. He didn’t get back to me at all. He just ignored me. So, I’ve asked for feedback and I’m not getting it.”

Facilitator: "Is that a common experience?"

Student 2: "They just don't reply to e-mails I find."

Student 1: "Everything's a lecturer by lecturer basis. It's not like a general rule for the department. Some are really nice and respond to every question you've got and then others just don't really care."

Students are generally aware that they are required to be proactive in seeking out feedback (more than in school, for example) but there were concerns about the lack of clear expectations.

"If they said 'anyone who wants feedback can email and we'll set up a meeting', then maybe people would do it more, but you've got to kind of take it upon yourself."

There is a clear perception that some staff are uninterested in teaching, providing feedback or in supporting students.

Student 1: "They'd do it because they'd be obligated to do it but they would maybe be a bit disgruntled about having to do it. But last year there was one or two and I felt like, this person would not want to do this in any way, shape or form".

Student 2: "And it does feel like they don't care and they are just doing this either for money, as another job, or they're doing it because somebody said, 'Oh, you'd be good at that', and they went, 'Okay, I'll give it a try.' It's not because they've got passion or they want to pass on their learning or inspire us."

Student 1: "I think there's a sense of..."

Student 2: "We're getting in their way."

Student 3: "Yes"

2.5 Students would like to have test papers returned to them

Another challenge to the use of feedback identified by students, particularly in the Science and Engineering Faculties, is access to their test papers.

Some students are unhappy that they receive a simple mark on an assignment, without the ability to see where they actually went wrong.

"And we didn't get our answer sheet back with what we got right and what we got wrong. We just got a percent. So we don't actually know, 'right this equation that we used is right and this one's wrong'. Because we needed it for this year. We needed to know those equations for this year. We don't know if we're using the wrong equations because we didn't actually get our script back. "

"This year one of our lecturers gave us our test papers back to see our working, to see where we went wrong and what questions we actually got right. Because obviously you can't remember what you got on the day. But that's one of the first people to do that."

It appears that effort expended by teaching staff on providing group feedback after tests is often wasted, as without their test papers students struggle to connect the feedback with their own work.

"They don't give you your scripts back usually, but they will give you your mark and then the lecturer will usually go over the exam, and if you can remember what you have done, you can see where you've gone wrong. But without your script back, it is very hard. Unless you remember exactly what you did, it is very hard to go, 'Oh, that's where I've gone wrong'."

Students often complain about the lack of individual feedback on exams. However some students suggested that a key issue is in fact the return of scripts.

“The easiest feedback you should always get is the mark, and I think a copy of your paper so you can find out which questions you need to brush up on, which areas of the course you need to brush up on.”

3. Overview of findings related to assessment

3.1 Assessments often encourage rote learning rather than deeper understanding

In all seven programmes, students were concerned that too much effort is spent on memorising content in order to complete assignments, and there is too little emphasis on actually understanding the content.

“I think if things in previous years had been assessed in a way that actually made you need to understand it rather than just learn facts I would be much better prepared now.”

This is a particular problem for exams. There was a general consensus that exams require rote-learning rather than understanding.

“Yes, some classes you’re just learning what the information is on the slide and then you can regurgitate it and then probably five minutes after the exam you’ve forgotten what it was.”

“I mean we have quite a lot of exams. We had to learn references, names and years. Where is the point in that? Am I more employable in the end? Absolutely not. I just showed that I can remember stuff.”

The quantitative data showed a mixed picture of whether students’ felt that exams were useful, and there was no difference in the perceptions of staff and students on whether examinations were helpful.

The audit data suggests that students in several of the eight TESTA programmes encounter particularly high volumes of assessment tasks. The average figure for all eight programmes is 14 assessments per Semester, or 112 over the course of a 4-year programme. Some students felt the focus on rote learning was generated by a high workload, as the volume of content and assessment tasks mean that there is insufficient time to understand material in any depth.

“Student 1: The course would be better if we weren’t just sitting memorising stuff. But right now the state it’s in you need to just memorise stuff and be able to see lots of questions.”
Student 2: “And if you try and understand it, you fall behind.”

Reviewing module descriptors and other paperwork it is clear that most teaching staff intend for students to focus on understanding and critically evaluating material, and that a focus on memory is not by design. Some students commented on this gap between intention and reality.

“I think they try to get us to think about what it is that we’re actually doing but when it actually comes to studying for the exams, it then becomes more about just remembering, remembering what it is that they’re lecturing you rather than actually really learning it. I’ve always said I would love to have a photographic memory because it would make the exams so much easier [laughs].”

In comparing the students’ questionnaire responses to those from students at other institutions, the clearest area of concern related to the focus on rote learning. For four of the eight programmes Strathclyde students were statistically significantly more likely than others in their discipline cluster to feel that they have to concentrate on memorising.

This was also an area where there were large differences between staff and students. 77% of students felt that when they're reading they try to memorise facts, compared to 34% of staff. 55% of students felt that they have to learn things without having a chance to understand them, compared to 25% of staff.

3.2 Some assessments are perceived to be irrelevant to students' future careers, and there are concerns about the focus on theory over practice

There was a common concern about the relevance of assessments – and programme content – to expected careers in particular and the world of work in general. This emerged as a theme in nearly all of the programmes and was a central theme in three of the eight.

There were a number of student concerns in this area, such as whether enough staff had industry/professional experience, whether on-campus learning was sufficiently connected to learning in industrial/professional practice (e.g. on placement), and specific classes that were seen as irrelevant.

There was a particular concern that assessments did not sufficiently focus on knowledge and skills that would be of use in students' anticipated career:

"I don't really think the assignment gauges you as a [professional], I think it is just something there that you need to complete as an essay, it is just for a mark basically."

"I feel a class memorising equations is just a waste of time. I really think the department should really think about what makes a good [professional] and weight it correctly. They should just assume that everyone's playing to get the highest marks they can."

Student: "I just think what they say we will do here is not what we really do."

Facilitator: "What do they say that you're going to do?"

Student: "That we are ready for the market in the very end. I'm ready for a research position,[laughter] sorry but not for getting into the job."

A related concern expressed by some students was the focus in assessments on theoretical content rather than practical skills, which for some was at odds with what was expected.

"When I was at school and I was choosing a subject to study at uni, I thought [subject] because I thought it was going to be a practical subject because even at school, exams bothered me. And I thought, [subject] is a practical subject, I might be able to get out of exams, not realising the emphasis that Strathclyde has on exams."

Student 1: "What I think everyone wants to say is that this hasn't given us much of a practical outlook rather than how to think theoretically, and how to understand the concepts rather than apply those concepts in real life."

Student 2: "It has sometimes felt too much like a research course here than getting education towards being more employable or ready for the market, let's put it that way."

3.3 Standards and expectations are not always clear

There was a common concern about the transparency and consistency of criteria for assessed work. The quantitative data suggested that this is a particularly important factor in students' overall experience: the questionnaire item with the strongest correlation with overall satisfaction was 'It is

often hard to discover what is expected of me in this course'. For the four programmes in which NSS questions were included in the TESTA questionnaire, there was evidence of a challenge in this area: for three of the four programmes, results were statistically significantly worse than the subject-level sector average for both 'The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance' and 'Marking and assessment has been fair'.

Some students seem to feel in the dark about what is expected of them.

"I don't know how to write a university essay. No one's ever told me. Like, I don't know."

"Well to be honest, I don't think we really know how they are marked. We presume there is a set answer they are looking for but half the time we come out of an exam and everyone is like, 'what did you write for that one?'"

"There was an element of, we had to kind of figure out stuff for ourselves, which is fair enough, we should be figuring things out for ourselves. But there was also an element of 'we don't know what they want from us'."

Clarity of criteria

One area of concern was around students' understanding of the marking criteria for assessments. Where students were aware of the explicit marking criteria, they often felt that they were overly vague and thus unhelpful.

Facilitator: "Do you know what's expected of you?"

Student: "Yes, they'll say 100% to 90% would be this and 90% to 70%, all of that. Then, all the same. Apart from 'outstanding', 'excellent', 'adequate', that's the only word that's changed in each box. Not helpful, one bit."

There was also a sense that beyond these formal criteria, different members of staff had different expectations, sometimes about very basic aspects of the assessment requirements.

"I think lack of communication within the modules has always been a problem. Across the board. Sometimes someone says one thing and it's like, well, my tutor didn't say that my tutor says to do this. But you're going off the same criteria."

Marker variation

Another obstacle to students' understanding of expectations seems to be inconsistency between how different members of staff mark assignments.

"Lecturers seem to want drastically different things from assignments which makes it difficult to gauge the standard of my work."

Some students felt that lack of communication between different members of staff was a cause.

"They all assume that other classes want the same thing, so they assume you know."

Another perceived cause was different staff members' willingness to use a broader range of marks.

"Some of them are really generous and some of them are not. It seems like the people that are getting high marks have all been marked by the same person."

“The problem is just that some markers take their range of marks around 60 to 70 and then everyone in the class would be between those or else, others will take it between 60 and 90.”

Student 1: “She was like ‘I give hundreds’. And then in another class, they say ‘we rarely give over seventy’.”

Student 2: “Not consistent at all.”

Moderator: “So they just tell you that?”

Student 1: “Yes they are open with it.”

Moderator: “And is that good?”

Student 3: “It a bit surprising sometimes because it depends on every teacher. Sometime it's like I had a very good report and I had sixty five, it's a bit disappointing and with [another class] if it had been very good, I would probably have had I don't know eighty or seventy five. It's confusing, you have your grade and you don't know what it means to be honest.”

3.4 There are mixed feelings about formative and low-stakes assessment

The collected audit figures show that on average students on the eight TESTA programmes encounter 25 summative assessments per year, of which around half (13) are ‘low-stakes’, meaning that they contribute 10% or less towards a class mark, and are likely to have a formative intention. In contrast there are on average very few purely formative assessments (that do not contribute at all towards a class mark), just 3 per year on average.

Students’ perceptions of formative and low-stakes assessment were mixed. In general they were positive.

Student 1: “I think the best way was how we did it last year, there was online tests every couple of weeks or something like that. And they were worth 1% or 5% total for them all but...”

Student 2: “You remembered it.”

Student 1: “You don't need to worry that you were getting a bad mark and you could learn from the stuff just by doing the tests.”

Student 3: “It doesn't impact your final grade that much so it doesn't matter if you get them wrong but it just helps you to learn.”

“Quizzes in lectures are 10/10 useful.”

Specific benefits cited by students were that they help them to work continuously rather than just cramming for a final exam, and they valued the opportunities to practice skills and techniques.

“It's like if after each topic there was like a mini class test or something, and that was the topic. You'd have to continuously learn stuff, as opposed to one big exam, which you could just do nothing for most of the year and then spend the last few weeks cramming for the exam.”

“Basically if we work on something, fair enough, that one is getting marked, but just give us the option of having more to work on. Even if it's not getting marked. It's not compulsory, but if you need to work on it and put yourself in that it's there to work on.”

However, there were some concerns expressed about low-stakes assessment. There were concerns that they contributed so few marks.

“It’s really damning when you get a report back and you’ve got nine or ten out of ten and then they say, ‘Actually, you know what? That’s worth zero % of your grade, it’s added nothing.’ And I’ll say, ‘Well, I just literally spent four hours, plus three and a half hours in the lab, perfecting this amazing report to achieve nothing.’”

It was also apparent that competition between classes affects the energy that students expend on low-stakes and purely formative assessments.

“In the end it’s 10% of your class mark so even though it really is going to help you in the long-run what’s the point in putting in all this time to something that’s worth 10% of your class? Because it’s so disproportionate because then you’ll lose time for the assignments that maybe make up 70% of your class.”

Student 1: “So if it was optional and there was other stuff that we had, that would go towards our final grade, we’d all sacrifice the optional stuff to do the stuff that we’ve produced now.”

Student 2: “So, you would need a window where there was nothing that counted.”

Student 1: “Which is not going to happen.”

Appendix A: The Assessment Experience Questionnaire

(Response options: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

Quantity of effort

- 7. The way the assessment works you have to put the hours in regularly every week
- 16. On this course it is necessary to work consistently hard to meet the assessment requirements

Coverage of syllabus

- 6. You have to study the entire syllabus to do well in the assessment
- 6. The assessment system makes it possible to be quite selective about what parts of courses you study
- 13. It is possible to be quite strategic about which topics you can afford not to study
- 20. The way the assessment works on this course you have to study every topic

Quantity and quality of feedback

- 3. I receive hardly any feedback on my work
- 18. I don't understand some of the feedback on my work
- 19. Whatever feedback I receive on my work comes too late to be useful

Use of feedback

- 1. I use the feedback I receive to go back over what I have done in my work
- 2. The feedback I receive prompts me to go back over material covered in the course
- 9. I pay careful attention to feedback on my work and try to understand what it is saying

Appropriate assessment

- 12. The staff seem more interested in testing what I have memorised than what I understand
- 17. Too often the staff ask me questions just about facts
- 22. To do well on this course all you really need is a good memory

Clear goals and standards

- 8. It is always easy to know the standard of work expected
- 11. The staff make it clear from the start what they expect from students
- 15. It is often hard to discover what is expected of me in this course

Surface approach

- 23. When I'm reading I try to memorise important facts which may come in useful later
- 27. I find I have to concentrate on memorising a good deal of what we have to learn
- 28. Often I find I have to study things without having a chance to really understand them

Deep approach

- 24. I usually set out to understand thoroughly the meaning of what I am asked to read
- 25. I generally put a lot of effort into trying to understand things which initially seem difficult
- 26. I often find myself questioning things that I hear in classes or read in books

Learning from the examination

- 29. Doing exams brings things together for me
- 30. I learn new things while preparing for the exams
- 31. I understand things better as a result of the exams

Satisfaction

- 32. Overall I am satisfied with the quality of this course

National Student Survey

- 4. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance
- 10. Marking and assessment has been fair
- 14. Feedback on my work has been timely
- 21. I have received helpful comments on my work

Appendix B: Overview of AEQ results*Aggregated students' responses for all eight programmes (n=1567)*

Figures represent the proportion of students agreeing with each of the statements.

Q1	I use the feedback I receive to go back over what I have done in my work	71%
Q2	The feedback I receive prompts me to go back over material covered in the course	55%
Q3	I receive hardly any feedback on my work	33%
Q4	The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance	35%
Q5	You have to study the entire syllabus to do well in the assessment	54%
Q6	The assessment system makes it possible to be quite selective about what parts of courses you study	27%
Q7	The way the assessment works you have to put the hours in regularly every week	68%
Q8	It is always easy to know the standard of work expected	44%
Q9	I pay careful attention to feedback on my work and try to understand what it is saying	78%
Q10	Marking and assessment has been fair	31%
Q11	The staff make it clear from the start what they expect from students	59%
Q12	The staff seem more interested in testing what I have memorised than what I understand	22%
Q13	It is possible to be quite strategic about which topics you can afford not to study	28%
Q14	Feedback on my work has been timely	15%
Q15	It is often hard to discover what is expected of me in this course	26%
Q16	On this course it is necessary to work consistently hard to meet the assessment requirements	77%
Q17	Too often the staff ask me questions just about facts	10%
Q18	I don't understand some of the feedback on my work	27%
Q19	Whatever feedback I receive on my work comes too late to be useful	32%
Q20	The way the assessment works on this course you have to study every topic	54%
Q21	I have received helpful comments on my work	33%
Q22	To do well on this course all you really need is a good memory	23%
Q23	When I'm reading I try to memorise important facts which may come in useful later	79%
Q24	I usually set out to understand thoroughly the meaning of what I am asked to read	79%
Q25	I generally put a lot of effort into trying to understand things which initially seem difficult	84%
Q26	I often find myself questioning things that I hear in classes or read in books	56%
Q27	I find I have to concentrate on memorising a good deal of what we have to learn	61%
Q28	Often I find I have to study things without having a chance to really understand them	57%
Q29	Doing exams brings things together for me	43%
Q30	I learn new things while preparing for the exams	68%
Q31	I understand things better as a result of the exams	47%
Q32	Overall I am satisfied with the quality of this course	74%

Comparison of each of the eight programmes with the TESTA average for the relevant discipline cluster (arts and humanities, social sciences, STEM, health sciences), plus the overall Strathclyde data compared with the overall TESTA average; for the 10 question groups

	Programme A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Overall
Quantity of Effort		++		+		--	++	++	++
Coverage of Syllabus			++	++	++	--	++	++	++
Quantity and Quality of Feedback	--	++	--	++	--	++		--	--
Use of Feedback		++	--	++			++	--	+
Appropriate Assessment		++	--				++	++	++
Clear Goals and Standards		++	--	+	--	+		--	++
Surface Approach		--	--					--	--
Deep Approach						--	++		+
Learning from the Examination			++		++	-	++		++
Overall Satisfaction	--	++		++			--	--	-

++ indicates that the Strathclyde result is more positive than the comparison group and statistically significant at the p<0.01 level

+ indicates that the Strathclyde result is more positive than the comparison group and statistically significant at the p<0.05 level

-- indicates that the Strathclyde result is more negative than the comparison group and statistically significant at the p<0.01 level

- indicates that the Strathclyde result is more negative than the comparison group and statistically significant at the p<0.05 level

Comparisons of student responses (n=1289) with staff responses (n=113)

Note: Student responses are limited to those from the six programmes where a staff-facing questionnaire was also administered. For the questions drawn from the NSS (Q4, Q10, Q14 and Q21) data is only drawn from four programmes: n (students) = 830; n (staff) = 72.

		Students	Staff
Q1	I use the feedback I receive to go back over what I have done in my work	76%	41%
Q2	The feedback I receive prompts me to go back over material covered in the course	62%	48%
Q3	I receive hardly any feedback on my work	30%	4%
Q4	The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance	64%	83%
Q5	You have to study the entire syllabus to do well in the assessment	54%	58%
Q6	The assessment system makes it possible to be quite selective about what parts of courses you study	30%	32%
Q7	The way the assessment works you have to put the hours in regularly every week	70%	57%
Q8	It is always easy to know the standard of work expected	48%	52%
Q9	I pay careful attention to feedback on my work and try to understand what it is saying	80%	37%
Q10	Marking and assessment has been fair	58%	88%
Q11	The staff make it clear from the start what they expect from students	63%	62%
Q12	The staff seem more interested in testing what I have memorised than what I understand	21%	18%
Q13	It is possible to be quite strategic about which topics you can afford not to study	30%	34%
Q14	Feedback on my work has been timely	29%	69%
Q15	It is often hard to discover what is expected of me in this course	22%	10%
Q16	On this course it is necessary to work consistently hard to meet the assessment requirements	79%	73%
Q17	Too often the staff ask me questions just about facts	9%	6%
Q18	I don't understand some of the feedback on my work	24%	20%
Q19	Whatever feedback I receive on my work comes too late to be useful	30%	12%
Q20	The way the assessment works on this course you have to study every topic	53%	47%
Q21	I have received helpful comments on my work	62%	85%
Q22	To do well on this course all you really need is a good memory	19%	11%
Q23	When I'm reading I try to memorise important facts which may come in useful later	77%	34%
Q24	I usually set out to understand thoroughly the meaning of what I am asked to read	81%	45%
Q25	I generally put a lot of effort into trying to understand things which initially seem difficult	85%	47%
Q26	I often find myself questioning things that I hear in classes or read in books	55%	46%
Q27	I find I have to concentrate on memorising a good deal of what we have to learn	57%	32%
Q28	Often I find I have to study things without having a chance to really understand them	55%	25%
Q29	Doing exams brings things together for me	48%	46%
Q30	I learn new things while preparing for the exams	75%	49%
Q31	I understand things better as a result of the exams	54%	33%
Q32	Overall I am satisfied with the quality of this course	78%	56%

Appendix C: Overview of audit figures

	Average figures per year of study	Compared to TESTA average (where available)
Summative assessments	25	High
Low-stakes summative assessments ¹	14	N/A
Formative assessments	3	Medium
Exams	4	N/A
Variety of assessment formats	7	High

¹Subset of summative assessments