

## Fieldwork/Laboratory-Based Assessment in a COVID-19 Context

Fieldwork and laboratory-based learning are key features of many disciplines at Trinity. The use of traditional assessment strategies in these contexts has been suspended, except where this cannot be avoided, in line with national policy in the context of the ongoing pandemic.

This document outlines some general and practical suggestions for academics to consider when repurposing/redesigning an assessment strategy for modules with laboratory/fieldwork components, which will likely vary extensively across different disciplines/contexts.

**When assessing fieldwork or laboratory-based learning, please consider the following points:**

- 1. Learning Outcomes (LOs):** Assessment should always be focused on the demonstration of achievement of LOs. Is the re-demonstration of the achievement of LOs essential?
  - a. Identify LOs that have been achieved in previous assessment in the module.
  - b. Identify LOs that have been achieved in other modules in the programme.
  - c. If not a or b, can lab/field-based competencies expressed in the LOs be assessed in a different way?
- 2. Previously Completed Assessments:** Can previously completed lab/fieldwork component of a given module be deemed to demonstrate the achievement of LOs, e.g. where students have already submitted reports for 3 out of 5 lab sessions?
- 3. Fieldwork-specific assessment considerations:**
  - a. Does the fieldwork component constitute the entire or part of a module?
  - b. Can the assessment of the module be re-designed where relevant LOs have already been achieved without the fieldwork component?
  - c. Is the module a stand-alone fieldwork module, e.g. a module taking place in a block such as a week-long intensive visit to a field site? Teaching and learning strategies will need to be revisited in addition to the redesign/repurposing of assessment.
- 4. Professional accreditation requirements:** Identify and accommodate assessments which evidence knowledge/skill competencies as part of accreditation/certification processes, e.g. in laboratory service teaching for Health Sciences programmes.
- 5. Oral assessment:** Can students demonstrate practical skills/competencies/knowledge through remote oral assessment?
- 6. Practical skills/techniques:** Assessment can draw on online/virtual environments that promote the use of 'correct' practical techniques and protocols. Discipline-specific online resources (e.g. videos, game-based simulations) are available online through professional societies such as the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Anatomical Society, or from Engineers Ireland. Structured questioning could require students to interpret or critique these resources in a new assessment, e.g. interpreting a video of a procedure or technique.

7. **Provide data sets:** Consider providing students with existing data sets that enable them to demonstrate their achievement of LOs aligned with the ability to carry out data analysis and problem solving in the laboratory or field, e.g. students sort, clean up, analyse, and evaluate the data, presenting it in the form of charts, graphs etc.
8. **Interpretation of scenarios:** Consider using scenario-based questions to require students to demonstrate their understanding of the skills, techniques and approaches/competencies required to collect raw data in the field/ complete a laboratory procedure.
9. **Rubrics:** Ensure any modifications in assessment are reflected in existing rubrics. Where this is not possible, develop new criteria for the redesigned assessment as deemed appropriate in the discipline.
10. **Communicating change:** Do your colleagues/technical staff/graduate teaching assistants have a shared understanding of new lab/field based assessment practices and their role in them? Have you clarified any changes in the assessment protocol with students?
11. **Equivalency:** Bear in mind that [student workload](#) is impacted by assessment. Does a revised assessment make similar demands of students in terms of overall workload as the originally planned assessment?
12. **Inclusivity:** Take account of reasonable adjustments for students with additional needs.

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