



HEA Teaching and Learning Conference December 2024

Driving Changes in Teaching and Learning through Policy and Innovation

HEA AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS
HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY



RAFT - Re - Imagining Assessment & Feedback Together

Name of Institution/Organisation
Munster Technological University
Who led the initiative?
Teaching and Learning Unit
Date and timeframe of the initiative
Academic Year 2021-22 and on-going
What was the reach of the initiative?
The initiative involved 60 staff in total over the three years, approximately 20 per year. Most projects focused on modules, a few on programmes. We did not ask staff to report on the number of students registered on modules/programmes (an oversight on our part). As evidenced from participants quotes (see later sections) many of the modules would be characterised as large classes (>100 students). Taking a conservative estimate of 40 students per module * 60 staff the estimated number of students immediately impacted is 2,400.

Aims/Objectives
The broad aim of this initiative was to support the professional development of staff through small-scale action research projects. Specific objectives were to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhance assessment and especially feedback practices • enable staff to co-design aspects of the assessment process with students • develop the pedagogical research skills of academic staff • explore impact and generate evidence-based case-studies to support transfer to other contexts
Rationale and Identified Needs
Internationally, the literature on assessment and feedback in higher education is really clear that assessment and feedback has huge potential to positively impact on student learning (Huisman et al., 2019; Morris et al., 2021; To et al., 2022). However, designing assessment processes to realise this potential is problematic and consequently Assessment has been classified as a “wicked problem” in higher education (Canning & Eve, 2020). The literature identifies that, in general, assessment and feedback approaches fail to deliver on their potential to support learning and are largely teacher-centered (Boud & Molloy, 2013; Wiliam, 2011) while surveys reveal that students are less satisfied with assessment feedback than any other component of their higher education experience (Callender et al., 2014; ISSE, 2022). As with any “wicked problem” the solution is complex, but part of the solution involves developing the assessment and feedback literacy of academic staff (Carless & Winstone, 2023). <p>Of particular note in an Irish context is results from the 2022 Irish Survey of Student Engagement. This survey reveals that while approximately 67% of students are satisfied with the quality of teaching received, only 38% believe that lecturers provided feedback on a work in progress and only 43% believe that teachers provided prompt feedback. This 43% statistic contrasts strongly with the 66% satisfaction rate reported by the 2022 UK National Student Survey in response to the question “Feedback on my work has been timely” (National Student Survey 2022 results - Office for Students). This would suggest that feedback practice in Ireland lags practice elsewhere and consequently is deserving of a particular focus.</p>



Frameworks, Policies, or Strategies Aligned (internal, local or national)
Both the MTU document ‘Our Future 2040 – A New University for a New World’ and the TURN report clearly state that part of the distinctiveness of a TU is ‘research-based teaching and learning practices’. Through the RAFT initiative staff are supported to develop their own pedagogical research expertise to research and evidence the impact of their interventions. <p>‘Our Shared Vision’ which defines MTU’s strategic plan to 2027 identifies Learner Education and Experience as its first theme. A strategic objective that MTU commits to is that MTU ‘will excel in teaching, learning, assessment and engagement’ (p. 10). The RAFT initiative clearly supports the achievement of this theme and acting on this strategic objective.</p>

Categories	Elements	Topics	Target Groups
	Curriculum and Assessment		Staff
Consult	Innovation in Teaching	Academic Integrity	
Create	Professional Development		
	Research and Evaluation	Innovations in Assessment and Feedback	
		Student Engagement and Partnership	
		Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Approaches	