

Title	Changing from exams to coursework	
Name	Deborah Fitzgerald-Moore	Breakdown of associated recorded interview
Course/Module/ other	Strategic Management Module, Events, Hospitality, Tourism and Food Programme	
Level/s	6	
Student Numbers	400 (approx) with 5% International students.	
Briefly describe the inclusive change you introduced? (This can be at any time in the past)	Change from an exam to course work. Students can choose the focus of a 3,000 word report on a company of their choice but one that falls within the sector reflected in the title of their degree. In other words, if the student is studying Hospitality Management Programme the case study of their report must be working in the hospitality sector.	0:23 - 1:45
What prompted you to make this change?	<p>Past experiences have shown that students struggle with exams in the Strategic Management area. You can either set a purely theoretical exam to make it fair across all the different degree titles - but students struggled and success rates were poor - or you can set a case study exam. However, the problem here is that you have to find case studies for all the diverse range of courses and this often raises questions of fairness from students who feel that other case studies were easier than their own. Additionally, the cost of buying in case studies has increased dramatically as they are now purchased per student.</p> <p>Then there are the issues related to reasonable adjustments and finding extra rooms and invigilation or having to create alternative assessments for a small number of students.</p> <p>Overall, it simply didn't seem as if the students</p>	1:46 - 3:34

	<p>were really demonstrating their learning with this form of assessment and success rates were poor whether using a theoretical exam or the case study approach.</p>	
<p>What impact did it have? (particularly for the student experience)</p>	<p>Allowing students to choose their case study gave them the opportunity to really explore a company within their own sector. This could be a company that they might want to work for in the future and this gave them the chance to really study it and enable them to decide whether it really was somewhere they could work.</p> <p>For International students it also allowed them to look at companies in their own country which might have a business or management culture closer to their own potential workplace and background.</p> <p>The report also was a sufficiently detailed and professional piece of work that they could then take with them to a job interview - a lot of students took considerable care over the presentation of their report. An external examiner focus group on a different level 6 module did comment that, in terms of employability, what would distinguish candidates would be their capacity to think and act strategically and this report format gives students the opportunity to demonstrate that thinking.</p> <p>Finally, success rates improved - very good first time pass rates and the only occasions where students didn't pass were due to exceptional circumstances rather than poor performance.</p>	<p>3:35 - 6:55</p>
<p>What student feedback have you had?</p>	<p>The student feedback was mixed mainly because it is a challenging piece of work. Although we introduced the work in October for an April submission and indicated that they would need to choose and start researching their company early, we did find that some students didn't appreciate the amount of time needed to</p>	<p>6:56 - 8:21</p>

	<p>complete it. Thus one student responded to say that they "only had 4 days to do the assignment" which indicated that he had been working through each piece of work chronologically, only starting the next once the previous deadline had passed. However, those that really engaged with the work were pleased with and quite often proud of, what they came up with.</p>	
<p>What additional resources did this change require, if any?</p>	<p>These were substantial pieces of work and therefore took a lot of time to mark. Some staff commented that they would like to see a reduced word limit next year. Also feedback took longer. We were using electronic feedback sheets which was a change from annotating the script with handwritten comments as all comments now had to be consolidated onto the sheets and sent out to students. Also, feedback on exam scripts was typically much less than on coursework.</p>	<p>8:22 - 10:33</p>
<p>What resources do you think you have saved in the longer term?</p>	<p>Some of the work was so good it can be used as resource material in the future so it has saved time there.</p> <p>There was also time saved due to the improved pass rates meaning less re-takes during the summer and less work involved in the implementation of learning contract recommendations for exams - extra invigilation, rooms and alternative assessments.</p> <p>Being a reasonable assessment for everybody makes it much more manageable than when tinkering around afterwards trying to fix things for particular students.</p>	<p>10:34 - 15:06 and 16:46 - 17:29</p>
<p>Do you intend to keep or modify this change in the future?</p>	<p>Yes. Bearing in mind that some of the students didn't start their work on this assignment early enough, we have come up with a way of encouraging this. At the moment students have to do a presentation in pairs on a theoretical topic during the year. We will change this to a group presentation whereby they must produce a PESTEL analysis on the sector within which their</p>	<p>15:07 - 16:45</p>

	<p>company sits. This means that they will have done a chunk of the work in January through looking at the external environment and probably the micro environment and how that will impact on the company. They will be individually assessed and we will make it very clear that this is preparation, a building block for the main assignment.</p>	
<p>Has this experience made you more or less likely to introduce further changes?</p>	<p>I think it has made me more likely to introduce changes elsewhere.</p>	<p>17:30 - 18:04</p>
	<p>Additional information provided at the end of the interview</p>	<p>18:05 - 22:09</p>