

Ollscoil  
Teicneolaíochta  
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic  
Technological  
University

# Re-imagining Assessment and Feedback for Student Success in Higher Education at the Atlantic Technological University

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## Project Symposium June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022

Presenter: Emma McDonald,  
Research Assistant,  
ATU Teaching and Learning Centre

# About the Re-imagining Assessment and Feedback Project

The study is supported by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Ireland under the SATLE funding.

The project leads include Dr Carina Ginty (ATU Galway-Mayo), Dr Niamh Plunkett and Gavin Clinch (ATU Sligo) and Dr Deirdre McClay (ATU Donegal).

To date in this project, we have worked in collaboration with three programmes across ATU: BA in Law and Criminal Justice (ATU Donegal Letterkenny), BA in Sociology and Politics (ATU Sligo), and BSc in Medical Science (ATU Galway City).



RE-IMAGINING ASSESSMENT  
AND FEEDBACK FOR  
STUDENT SUCCESS



NATIONAL FORUM  
FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING  
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

# Project team

Dr. Mary McGrath  
and Dr. Eleanor  
Rainsford (ATU  
Galway & Mayo)

Dr. Susan  
McDonnell and  
Dr. Maire Hanniffy  
(ATU Sligo)

Dr. Bronagh  
Heverin (ATU  
Donegal)

# Overview of research and outputs



Conducted an Audit and Review of the current assessment strategies on each of the three programmes



Survey of recent graduates and current undergraduate students on their experience with Assessment and Feedback



Focus group session with a number of students from each of the programmes



Showcasing/networking events in Sligo



Assessment Masterclass Series



Development of an Assessment Resource Online Directory (access on DigitalEd.ie - an ATU Digital Education Knowledge Platform)



ATU Re-Imagining Assessment Symposium June 2nd ATU Galway

# Audit and review process:

- ▶ Worked with programme leads from each programme to conduct an audit and review of the current assessments being used
- ▶ Each programme leads gathered details from academic staff about the assessment types and how they use them with students
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# Survey:



Two surveys were carried out earlier in the year with recent graduates and the current undergraduate students on each programme.



A list of both qualitative and quantitative questions were developed with input from the entire project group.

# Survey findings:

- ▶ 103 responses from across the 3 programmes
- ▶ Most participants were satisfied with the range of assessments types they have encountered throughout their course, below are two examples of the participants reasons:

*“The range of assessment types allows me to fully comprehend the depth of the module itself, which is a useful indicator to see where am I in my study progress”*

“I appreciate the mix of continual assessments and a final exam. I feel the continual assessment relieves some of the pressure of sitting the final exam knowing what percentage you have already achieved before sitting the final exam”.

- ▶ Those who indicated they were not satisfied, the reasons are as follows:
  - A lot of final exams – would like to see more CA's that are research based
  - Some modules have more variety than others
  - Would like more grade weight on CA work
  - Work in the field of study is primarily research based but exams are written closed book



RE-IMAGINING ASSESSMENT  
AND FEEDBACK FOR  
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# Survey Findings:

Very dissatisfied   Somewhat dissatisfied   Neutral   Somewhat satisfied   Very satisfied  
Have not completed this assessment type yet

Articles (writing and/or reviewing articles)



Blogs



Business Plan



Case Studies



Debates



Dissertation/Thesis



Portfolio/ePortfolio



Essay/Essay plan



Role play







RE-IMAGINING ASSESSMENT  
AND FEEDBACK FOR  
STUDENT SUCCESS

Examination written- closed book

Group based  
assessments

Laboratory reports

Literature review

Open-book  
examinations

Multiple choice  
questions (MCQ's)

Oral examinations

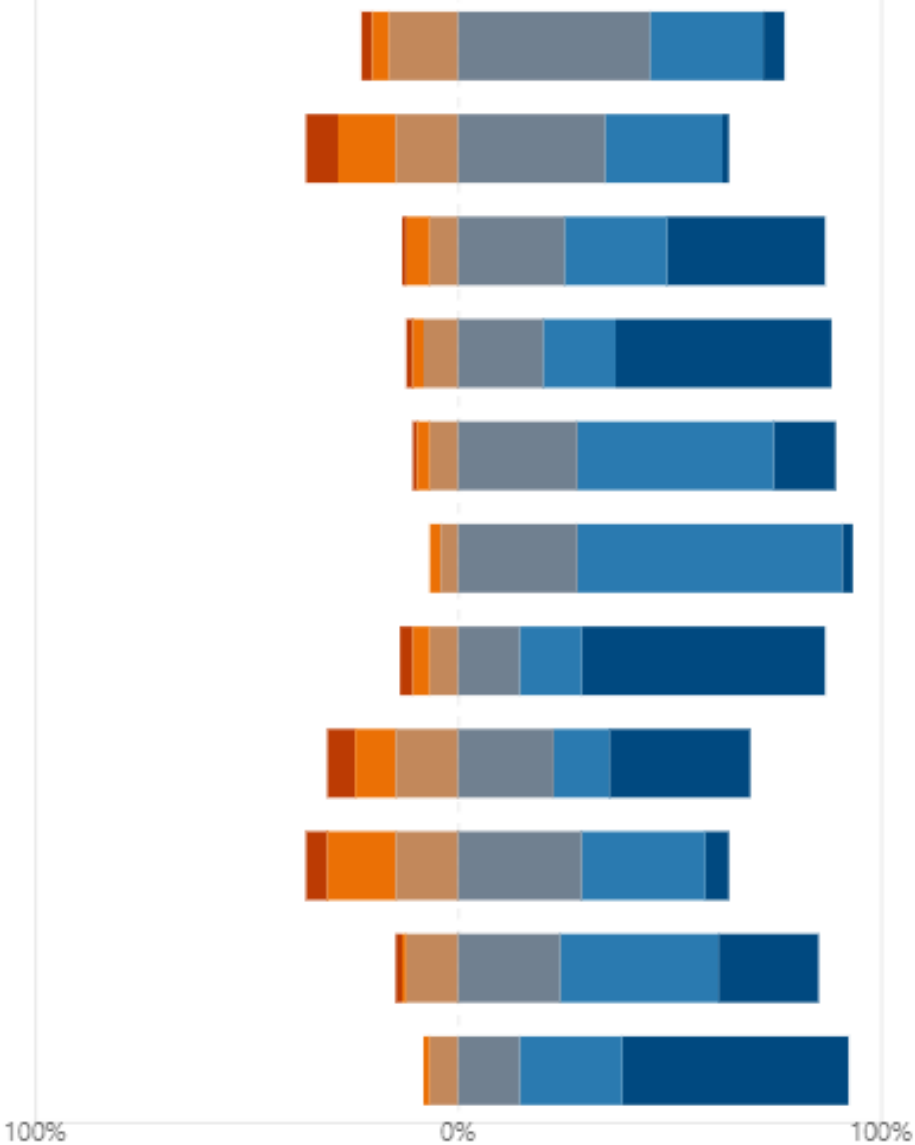
Peer graded  
assessments

Presentations (Face  
to face/virtual/video)

Practical  
assessments

Research project

# Survey Findings:



# Survey findings: Student experience with timing of assessments

MAYBE SPREAD OUT WHEN ASSIGNMENTS ARE BEING GIVEN OUT AND TOO MANY OF THE ASSIGNMENTS, I'VE GOTTEN ARE ALWAYS DUE AROUND THE SAME TIME MY OTHER MODULES ARE DUE

MORE TIME IS GIVEN FOR SOME TASKS TO ALLOW FOR BETTER QUALITY AND MORE IN-DEPTH

IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE A TIMETABLE FOR WHICH ASSESSMENTS NEED TO BE IN

I THINK THE QUANTITY OF CA'S SHOULD BE REDUCED SLIGHTLY OR AT LEAST NO MORE THAN 2 CA'S SHOULD BE DONE IN A WEEK

TRY AND HAVE THE ASSESSMENTS FOR EACH OF THE MODULES SPREAD OUT OVER A WIDER TIME FRAME TO AVOID HIGH STRESS LEVELS AND ENCOURAGE CONSTANT REVISION

# Survey findings:

- ▶ Participants were asked about their experience with feedback and what they perceive to be the benefits and drawbacks of receiving feedback on assessments.

## Benefits of Feedback on Assessment



Helps to learn where you are going wrong and make changes



Enhances learning



Helps to understand the information



Promotes a positive relationship between lecturers and students



Teaches people to take constructive feedback



Helps to improve grades



Gives reassurance and boosts motivation



It helps with growth in confidence of academic skills, and you become more aware and critical of your work

# Survey findings:

- ▶ Participants were asked about their experience with feedback and what they perceive to be the benefits and drawbacks of receiving feedback on assessments.

## Drawbacks of Feedback on Assessment



None – as long as it's beneficial, honest and constructive



Might be something you don't want to hear – some feedback may be taken to heart and discouraging



If its too vague or general



Can knock confidence



When you can't ask for an explanation for the feedback



If the feedback you receive in one module is different to another and cause you to lose marks in the other



If you don't receive it in sufficient time

# Survey findings: Feedback

The participants indicated that they prefer to receive feedback as soon as possible after completing an assessment.

## Why?

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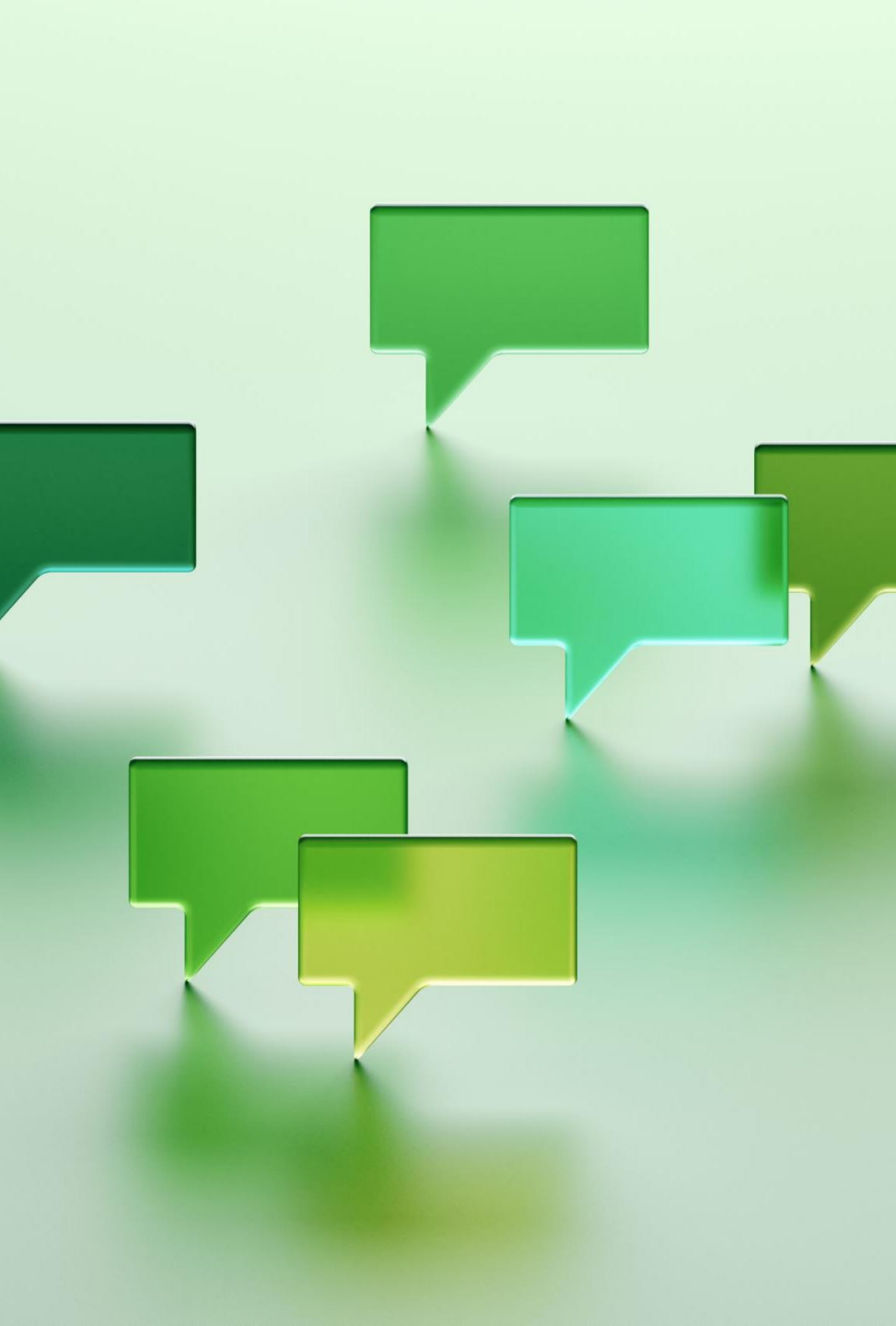
The sooner the feedback the fresher it is in memory

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It helps to correct future mistakes

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The longer it takes to get feedback the less effective it becomes as their focus has moved onto other elements of coursework



## Survey findings: Suggestions to help improve feedback

- ▶ Incorporate more positive feedback in with the negative
- ▶ Feedback given in a quicker timeframe
- ▶ Consistency of feedback across the entire programme
- ▶ More in-depth feedback
- ▶ Class discussions on most common mistakes
- ▶ More 1:1 feedback
- ▶ More personalised feedback instead of general feedback

# Survey findings: Authentic Assessment

(Authentic assessments are assessments that test your knowledge of a subject through realistic situations)



Mock trials

Debates/simulations/role play

Portfolios

Practical/lab-based assessment

Work placements

Case studies

# Survey findings: Covid 19

## Impact of the covid19 pandemic on experience with assessment

Positives	Negatives
Online assessments felt less stressful	Difficult
Open book assessments allowed us to engage with materials while trying to think critically	Broadband difficulties – poor lines of communication
Considering the circumstances, we were assessed fairly and thoroughly with great support from lecturers	Online lectures hard to stay concentrated
A difficult yet positive experience with pre-recorded lectures, briefs provided to help understand assessment details and requirements	Dethatched and left alone a lot of the time with struggles to reach people
Recorded lectures allowed for rewatching if you didn't understand it the first time you can rewatch	It has severely impacted my communication skills



# Survey findings: Covid 19

Participants from the undergraduate survey were asked if they could identify any benefits from changes to assessment as a result of covid. Below are some the benefits they identified:



OPEN BOOK EXAMS  
– ENHANCE  
LEARNING



MORE REGULAR  
ASSESSMENT –  
LEARNED SMALLER  
AMOUNTS OF  
INFORMATION  
MORE FREQUENTLY



MORE MODULES CA  
BASED RATHER  
THAN FINAL EXAMS



ONLINE  
PRESENTATIONS  
LESS STRESSFUL



MORE CASE  
STUDIES –  
CHALLENGED US  
MORE AS OPPOSED  
TO LEARNING OF  
PARAGRAPHS OF  
INFORMATION

# Survey findings: Suggestions to improve student experience with assessment and feedback



More focus on continuous assessment rather than exams



Blended learning and assessment



More definitive scheduling and assessments



Standby assessments created for situations such as covid



More variety in assessment types used



Feedback – improving the feedback system to make it quicker, more in depth and less negative

# Focus group session:



Following on from the surveys a focus group session was held with 10 participants with representation from each programme.



Students were given the opportunity to discuss their individual experience with assessment.



The focus group participant reiterated similar responses to those that were gathered through the survey and expanded on the answers with examples.



A point made by each participant is that they feel they are more engaged in assessments that enable them to put themselves into realistic and practical situations.



Another point noted was that it is not only important for students to understand how to do assessments but why they are doing those assessments

# Project outputs

## Showcase events:

As part of the project, we organised two showcasing events which took place in Sligo.



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graph TD; A[As part of the project, we organised two showcasing events which took place in Sligo.] --> B[Programme leads and academic staff, from the programmes shared and discussed their authentic and innovative assessment practices. They also shared grading rubrics and assessment briefs.]; B --> C[Student representatives from each programme were invited and had the opportunity to discuss with the project team their experiences with completing these assessments.];
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Programme leads and academic staff, from the programmes shared and discussed their authentic and innovative assessment practices. They also shared grading rubrics and assessment briefs.

Student representatives from each programme were invited and had the opportunity to discuss with the project team their experiences with completing these assessments.

# Project outputs

## Masterclass series:

This project also included an 'Assessment Masterclass Series' for all academic colleagues across ATU. This series was made up of four sessions:

- ▶ Making it real a masterclass with Kay Sambell and Sally Brown,
- ▶ Assessing Experiential Learning a masterclass with Rick Roe,
- ▶ Creating Feedback Opportunities within the curriculum a masterclass with Edd Pitt,
- ▶ Development of Rubrics for Assessment a masterclass with Linda Suskie.

**View the assessment masterclasses at:**

**<https://www.digitaled.ie/webinarevents/assessment-masterclasses/>**

## Re-imagining Assessment: Making it real! A Masterclass with Kay Sambell and Sally Brown



RE-IMAGINING  
ASSESSMENT

### Re-imagining Assessment: Making it real! A Masterclass with Kay Sambell and Sally Brown



**Kay Sambell**  
Independent Consultant  
& Visiting Professor of  
Assessment for Learning,  
University of Sunderland  
& University of Cumbria



**Sally Brown**  
Independent Consultant  
in Learning, Teaching &  
Assessment & Emerita  
Professor, Leeds Beckett  
University

View their Covid-19 Assessment  
Collection [HERE](#)

This workshop will review how effective and authentic assessment can be undertaken across disciplines with plenty of practical examples showing how participants at the workshop can readily and creatively implement these approaches across the three institutions within the CUA alliance

[View the COVID-19 Assessment Collection](#)

[View Part 1 of this Masterclass slide deck](#)

[View Part 2 of this Masterclass slide deck](#)

## Re-imagining Assessment: Assessing Experiential Learning, A Masterclass with Rick Roe



RE-IMAGINING  
ASSESSMENT

### Re-imagining Assessment: Assessing Experiential Learning A Masterclass with Rick Roe



**Richard L. Roe**  
Professor of Law (retired),  
Georgetown University  
Law Center.

He was formerly the Director of the Street Law Program. He received his J.D. degree in 1977 from the University of Maine School of Law and A.B. from Yale College in 1969, majoring in Latin American Studies

This 2-hour online session will provide an introduction to experiential learning methodology and its assessment across the full range of university courses from classroom instruction, practicum projects and clinical educational settings.

The session will itself be conducted with interactive, participatory methods and will provide opportunities for participants to customise the principles to their own teaching approaches and interests.

**November 29th 2021**  
**2-4pm via Blackboard**  
**Click [HERE](#) to book**

[View Masterclass Recording](#)

[View Street Law Teaching Evaluation Rubric 2014-2015](#)

[View Sample Rubric for Beginning of Opening Statement](#)



## Re-imagining Assessment: Creating Feedback Opportunities within the Curriculum, A Masterclass with Edd Pitt



### Re-imagining Assessment: Creating Feedback Opportunities within the Curriculum A Masterclass with Edd Pitt



#### Dr. Edd Pitt

Programme Director for the Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education and Senior Lecturer in Higher Education and Academic Practice in the centre for the study of higher education

Kent University, UK

@DrEddPitt

Read more about Edd [HERE](#)

On December 16th 2021 Dr. Edd Pitt will be delivering two sessions:

Edd will deliver his keynote as part of the annual *GMIT Christmas Teaching & Learning Showcase* which will be held on Thursday, 16th December from 9.30am-12.30pm.  
Click [HERE](#) to book a slot at the Christmas Showcase

In the afternoon, Edd will host a *Masterclass Workshop on Creating Feedback Opportunities within the Curriculum: Leveraging time to maximise* the impact from 1.30-3pm  
Click [HERE](#) to book the Masterclass workshop

[View this Masterclass slide deck](#)

[View Feedback: Creating Opportunities within the Curriculum from Dr Edd Pitt](#)

## Re-imagining Assessment: Development of Rubrics for Assessment, A Masterclass with Linda Suskie



### Re-imagining Assessment: Development of Rubrics for Assessment A Masterclass with Linda Suskie



#### Linda Suskie

An internationally recognised consultant, writer, speaker, and educator on a broad variety of higher education assessment and accreditation topics

Her books include *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide* and *Five Dimensions of Quality: A Common Sense Guide to Accreditation and Accountability*

Read more about Linda [HERE](#)

**February 4th 2022 1-3pm  
via MS Teams  
Click [HERE](#) to book**

[Watch the Masterclass Recording](#)

[View this Masterclass slide deck](#)

# Project outputs:

## Online resource guide

- ▶ Has officially been launched today!
- ▶ An online assessment resource guide/directory has been developed to assist academic staff in the development and re-imagining of assessment and feedback strategies.
- ▶ This online assessment directory aims to be 'one-stop shop' of resources that will be continually updated with relevant and useful articles, guides and templates.

Available at: <https://www.digitaled.ie/assessment/>



# First look at resource:

## Assessment Resources

Explore a range of assessment resources developed through the **Re-imagining Assessment & Feedback for Student Success** project.



### Assessment Types

[View Now](#)



### Assessment Resources

[View Now](#)



### Assessment Tools

[Coming Soon!](#)

# First look at resource:

## Assessment Types

Filter by Title (A-Z)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

**Annotated Bibliography**

Students produce a list of citations from texts, primary sources and internet sites on specific topics followed by a brief descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the purpose of which is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

**App / Website Creation**

**Article Writing**

**Blog**

**Business Plan**

# First look at resource:

## Resource Guides

### Assessment Resource Guides

Assessment

**Academic Integrity Guide for Students  
ATU Galway TLO**

[View Resource](#)

Assessment

**Alternative Assessment Centre for Online  
Learning**

[View Resource](#)

Assessment

**Assessment Guidelines ATU Galway  
(2019)**

[View Resource](#)

Assessment

**Assessment in Practice National Forum –  
UCD Teaching and Learning (June 17th  
2021)**

[View Resource](#)

Assessment

**Assessment of/for/as Learning National  
Forum 2016-2018**

[View Resource](#)

Assessment

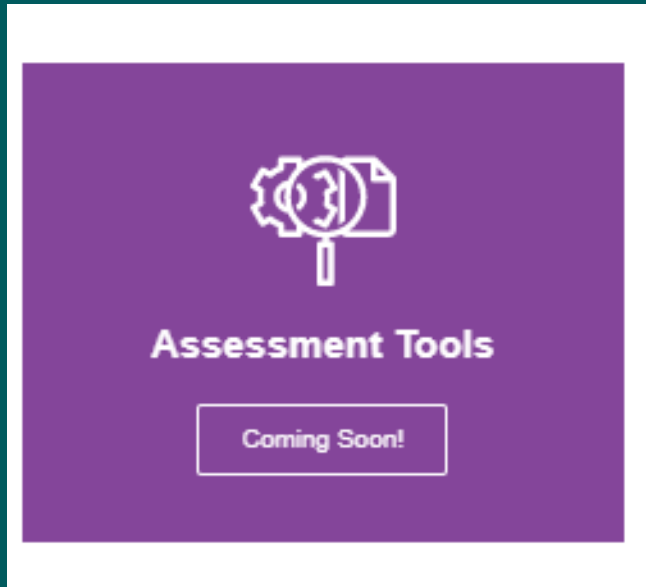
**Assessment Resources Student Learning  
and Development Trinity College Dublin**

[View Resource](#)

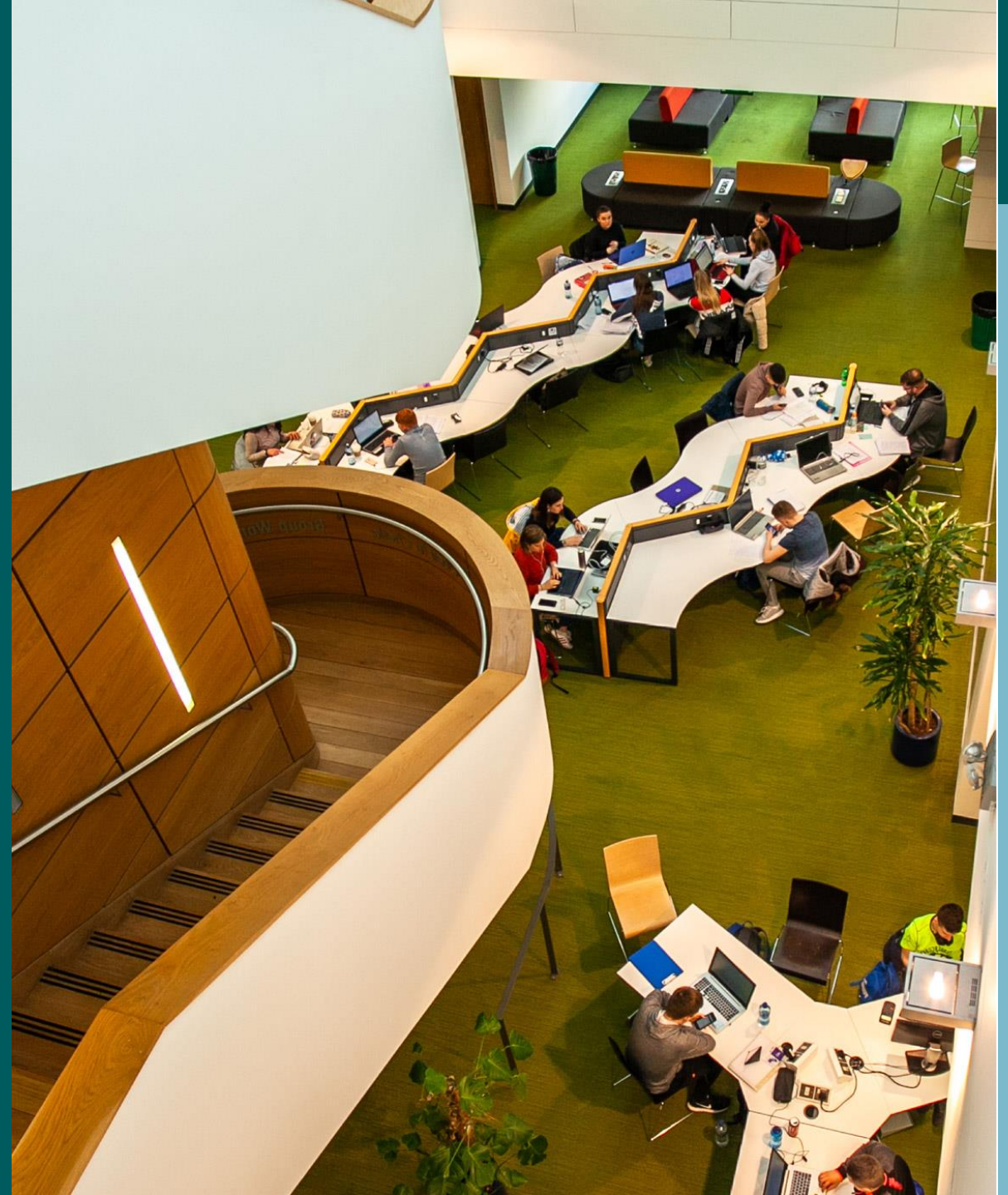


# Plan for the future

- Re-imagining Assessment and Feedback Phase 2
- Developing Assessment Tools



- Starting a Masters in Education at ATU in June. Supervisors Dr Carina Ginty, Dr Mary McGrath and Dr Kevin Cunningham.





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Thank you from all the Re-imagining  
Assessment and Feedback project team 😊

Contact: [Emma.mcdonald@gmit.ie](mailto:Emma.mcdonald@gmit.ie)