

# Assessment in Music:

an approach to aligning assessment with  
Learning Outcomes in Higher Music Education.



**AiMI:**  
ASSESSMENT IN MUSIC

AN APPROACH TO ALIGNING ASSESSMENT WITH THRESHOLD LEARNING OUTCOMES IN THE CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS



**Griffith** UNIVERSITY  
Queensland Conservatorium

AiM intended to

investigate alignment between existing  
assessment practices and CAPA TLOs.

All assessment in core courses in QCGU programs  
were mapped to program, institutional and  
national learning outcome statements (LOS).

Mapping to program and national LOS now  
effectively mandated.

The methodology (and QCGU results) are  
available on AiM web site.

AiM intended to

collect video and audio recordings of assessment performances for use in consensus moderation exercises.

Currently over 20 video assessments are available with additional audio files, with the collection growing each semester.

Files will be made available on application through the AiM web site.

AiM intended to

conduct an extensive literature review and make it available as a resource for others.

A report on Australian assessment practices was also prepared to provide context.

Focus groups were conducted with QCGU teachers and students.

An international assessment in music symposium was held and an edited book is forthcoming.

[assessmentinmusic.com.au](http://assessmentinmusic.com.au) is now online.

In the current context:

Learning outcomes must now be published at the degree program level, compliant with AQF specifications and meeting the standards set by the HESP as well as the CAPA TLOs.

In the current context:

The HESP requires valid and reliable assessment practices that enable comparability between programs and international benchmarking.

Comparability of assessment outcomes requires the shared understanding of standards.

A method to enable sharing standards between institutions was another AiM intended outcome.

Griffith University has committed to  
*consensus moderation (Sadler)*  
to ensure rigour in assessment.

Conducted at various stages and levels:

- course planning activities
- examples of individual student work when grades are determined
- to ensure consistent standards over time
- to ensure consistency between cognate courses

Consensus moderation requires that all assessors mark the same sample of student responses with, or without, prior consultation among themselves.

They then discuss the results of their marking in order to arrive at a common view about the grading 'standards' to be used for the whole student group.

This can be achieved inter-institutionally by using such web applications as Dropbox and Skype video conferencing, at almost no cost.

We already do this, in performance assessments.

Performance examiners work independently but consult before finalising reports.

Examiners frequently examine in related areas, broadening consensus within the institution.

Examiners occasionally examine in other institutions, broadening consensus between institutions.

We also do this, in popular music assessments.

Consensus is developed among the BPM community by assessing in company.

Participatory assessment contributes substantially to the development of BPM program learning outcomes.

# Royce Sadler's Backwards Assessment approach.

A common approach in assessing student achievement is to advise students before the event of the criteria that will be used in judging their levels of performance.

There are strong grounds for being wary about that approach. The main reason is the impossibility of accurately anticipating all the criteria that will turn out to be important in arriving at a sound judgment before actually scrutinising individual student works, which are all more or less different from one another.

If, instead, a judgment is made first, taking on board whatever aspects of the work or performance seem to be relevant to the judgment being made, the intellectual processes involved in scrutinising the work are radically changed. Not only that, but the explanations for the judgments will not only differ from one another but also be more tailored to each student work or performance.

If students can themselves be inducted into this type of thinking and practice, they will become better able to monitor the quality of their own work while it is under preparation and production.

Please join us.

Visit our web site often.

[www.assessmentinmusic.com.au](http://www.assessmentinmusic.com.au)

Send us your comments.

Buy many copies of *Assessment in Music  
Education: from Policy to Practice*

(in print, Springer)