ASKe (Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange) is a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) based in the Business School at Oxford Brookes University. It was set up in summer 2005 with a £4.5 million award from HEFCE in recognition of good practice based on pedagogic research into aspects of assessment.

The work of ASKe has been organised into three strands of activity

Strand 1: Replicating proven practice through

- A pre-assessment intervention which the ASKe team has shown to work. A simple intervention such as a marking workshop prior to undertaking an assessed task can significantly increase students' understanding of the assessment criteria and improve their performance of the task. ASKe has supported the development of this kind of intervention on all Business School programmes, as well as in three other Schools (Built Environment, Health and Social Care, and Westminster Institute of Education). This same support is available for the remaining four Schools plus five partner institutions.

- The Academic Conduct Officer (ACO) system which the ASKe team is further developing, in addition to researching effective ways of encouraging and promoting academic integrity.

- The Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) programme, long used by the Business School, which ASKe has extended across the School. Support is also offered to help at least three other Schools introduce PAL.

Strand 2: Pioneering evidence-based practice

Appropriate development projects will be funded, both within the Business School and across the whole University. Projects will seek out and support ways to develop and enhance assessment practices.

Strand 3: Cultivating a community of practice

The ASKe team has developed a new, £2 million building on Brookes' Wheatley Campus. This provides a physical environment to support student learning outside structured class time, in which staff and students can meet to develop a shared understanding of academic standards.

But it's more than just a building. The ASKe team argues that only a true community of practice will ensure shared understanding, so ASKe (in conjunction with other parties at Brookes) is also developing the social environment necessary to colonise this physical space.

To find out more about ASKe's work, please contact:
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Making **peer feedback** work in three easy steps!

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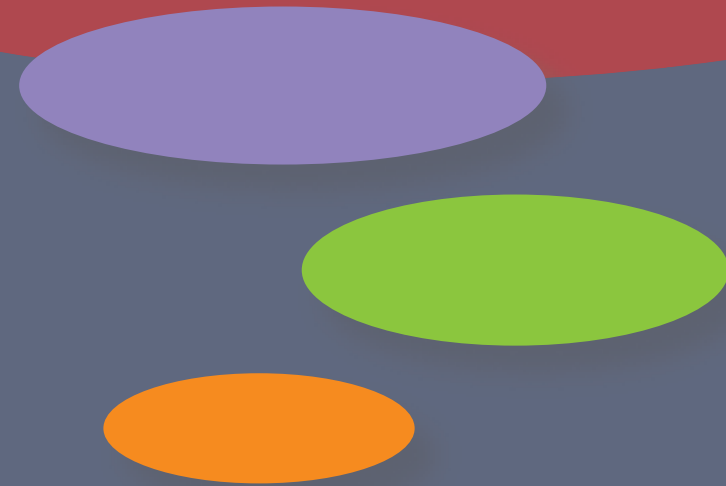
Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange
The Centre for Excellence in Assessment at the Business School

ASKe

Here are some reasons to encourage peer feedback:

It enhances your students' active engagement with their studies.

It increases the amount of feedback your students receive, and they get it more quickly than if you do it yourself.

It augments students' disciplinary understanding since peer feedback invariably requires explanation and justification.

The process of reviewing the work of others helps students understand what is considered good work and why, thereby increasing their ability to achieve.

...here's how you do it:

1 Prior to the peer review session, facilitate marking exercises that give students practice in assessment and feedback using sample assignments

- Start by giving students two sample assignments plus the assessment criteria that will be used in the peer review process.
- Ask students to individually grade and give feedback on the assignments using well-specified feedback forms.
- Run a workshop where students discuss and compare their evaluation with one another and their tutors[1].
- Stress that students can learn and improve their work by reading and reviewing peer assignments, but that they cannot keep these assignments, since verbatim copying is unacceptable.

2 Prepare for and structure the peer review session

- Students should bring at least two copies of their assignment to the session since each assignment should be reviewed by two peers.
- For groups of 30 or under, two hours is sufficient for students to read, consider and give feedback on a short assignment.
- Limit assignments for review to three pages or less: project and essay plans can work well.
- Allow sufficient time for students to use the outcomes of peer review: if revisions are later tutor assessed, build in at least two weeks.
- Explain the pedagogic rationale for peer review: stress that participants will gain as much from reviewing the work of their peers as from any feedback they receive.
- Place students in tutor-selected, non-friendship groups of three or four, and ensure that each student reviews two peer assignments.

3 Actively facilitate the peer review session, adhere to a strict timetable and tell students exactly what they must do and for how long

- Each student should read and review two peer assignments, allowing 30 minutes for each assignment and using well-specified feedback forms.
- Both peer reviewers should discuss and agree their feedback, altering their feedback sheets as appropriate (up to 15 minutes per assignment).
- Reviewers should feed back orally to the author of the assignment and hand over their review sheets (up to 15 minutes per assignment).
- During the session you (the facilitator) should read one completed assignment from each group to check comments and standards applied. This is particularly important if students are asked to grade as well as give feedback.
- At the end of the session, you should collect in all copies of the assignments to limit opportunities for plagiarism.
- It is important that students actively engage with their peer feedback. You can ensure this by requiring each student to explain how they have acted on the feedback (or why they have ignored it) as part of a subsequent tutor-assessed assignment.

[1] For a detailed description of how to do this, see the ASKe '1,2,3' leaflet 'Improve your students' performance in 90 minutes!'.