Anatomy of Assessment

Group audio podcast

Faculty: Medicine

Department: School of Public Health & School of Medicine

Module name: Lifestyle Medicine and Prevention (LMAP-1A)

Programme name: MBBS

Level: Level 4 Year 1

Approximate number of students: 360

Weighting: 80%/ 20%

Module ECTS: 10

Module type: core

Assessment overview

For this assessment first-year medical students work together in groups of five over a period of approximately four weeks to produce a 5-minute podcast with a focus on behaviour change, inequalities and population health. The cohort of 360 students split into five 'topics' based on a best-fit of the stated preferences for: sleep, physical activity, nutrition, mental health, and health and wealth. The podcast is followed up by Question and Answer session designed to de-risk the assessment from AI influence. The aim of the assessment is to foster learning from across the programme and apply behaviour change theory to a specific health challenge faced by university students or the wider community.

Design Decisions

Rationale for the assessment type

LMAP-1A is an introductory module for all first-year medical students. The module ILOs are as follows:

1. Describe the role of lifestyle change in health improvement and disease prevention at individual, community and population levels
2. Discuss key theories of behaviour change and recognise their application to individual patients making lifestyle changes
3. Identify the social determinants of health and inequalities and recognise their impact on the health and well-being of individual patients and populations
4. Describe the impact of lifestyle and socioeconomic factors such as nutrition, physical activity, sleep, financial security and substance misuse on health and well-being
5. Reflect on how your own lifestyle, alongside the physical and mental impact of being a medical student, affects your health and well-being, and discuss strategies for managing this
6. Demonstrate the ability to gather information about a person's lifestyle during a consultation by using communication skills in an empathetic and sensitive manner

> Having more creative forms of assessment simply means being more authentic in approaches to assessment. It is important to consider to what extent creative approaches are valued and encouraged and whether this needs to be reflected in the ILOs that explicitly assess higher order cognitive abilities, such as creativity.

The genesis of the module arose from the faculty's concerns around student wellbeing: recognising the potential benefits for physician health from better sleep, physical activity and nutrition. The module conceived as a means of recognising how the wider determinants of health, and health behaviours affected health outcomes. The original idea was that medical students would observe how these determinants shaped the health outcomes of patients, before reflecting on how the same determinants influenced their own health. Such a module required a different, more creative and reflective assessment approach than the typical MCQ based assessment type that dominates so many early-years medical curricula. A

Insights colour key

Educational Developer
Inclusivity
Learning Designer
Registry
Careers
AI

Interviewee: Richard Pinder
Role: Director of Undergraduate Public Health Education / Module Lead

5-minute group-based audio podcast (with written transcript) was thought to be a good way of achieving that; testing ideas and developing something that became a health improvement initiative as well as developing professionalism through group work. The group podcast incorporates an element of peer evaluation that forms part of the overall module grade. Over the years the students described the assessment as being "in the spirit of LMAP".

To add an individual component to a group task, a commentary was initially introduced alongside the podcast. This was to mitigate against any group engagement issues and ensure there was an individual incentive to participation. Each student was expected provide a summary on how behaviour change theory informed the ideas in their podcast. T This year, as a response to widespread availability of AI, the commentary was substituted with an in person question and answer session.

Rationale for change in light of AI
A number of online generative AI-powered tools have emerged in 2023 that plan and draft scripts for podcasts that can be accessed on a free or licensed basis. Initial simulations by the LMAP team have showed these tools (with appropriate prompting) can produce an adequate basic script for the assessment. The commentary component of the assessment can also be partially addressed by more mainstream generative AI tools. Accordingly, only the peer evaluation is immune from generative AI manipulation.

The podcast was felt to be a valuable assessment that allowed students to develop relevant skills that graduates need. There was not a suitable alternative to replace it. Some considerations were given to the replacement/ amendments to the commentary. Those options can be summarised as:

1. Do nothing
Whether warning students to avoid using generative AI or encouraging its use, there would be a material risk the assessment could be completed (albeit to an average level of quality) using generative AI and without the knowledge and skills that the assessment sought to cultivate.

2. Retain the individual written commentary but introduce an authenticity interview for some (but not all) students.
This is in-line with college guidance, and would not require a formal modification to the assessment plan. It was felt that this option would treat students unequally. Moreover, the interaction between the group nature of the podcast and the individual nature of the commentary would introduce considerable complexity if a student were to fail.

3. Replace the individual written commentary with an in-person individual question session.
This would ensure that all students answered at least one question each in their groups, but would require a formal change to the assessment arrangements. This would be considered a major change as the proposal is in-year. There are also significant resource implications for this option in terms of administration, space and academic staff to facilitate this new assessment.

4. Replace the entire assessment (podcast and commentary) with an assessment less susceptible to generative AI.
Given LMAP-1B (in the second year) is assessed via a more traditional (albeit open book) question-based assessment, the value of the podcast as a means of encouraging teamwork and investigating an elective topic was felt to be of continued value and utility. Substantial change was considered in light of the range of assessments used across Phase 1A.

It was considered that the third option was in the spirit of the Russell Group principles and retained a healthy balance between the pedagogical objectives of the original assessment and the risks presented by generative AI. Furthermore, this option was also felt to spread the burden of assessment more equally (and fairly) across all members of the team and provided an opportunity for a more equitable assessment of individuals as opposed to a sample-based approach offered by authenticity interviews. The current assessment therefore consists of:

1. Group produced podcast (that is tutor assessed)
2. Question and answer session where every student would be asked at least one question. The question relates to the podcast they have developed, evidence cited within it, or the implications and limitations of their proposal /

ideas.

3. Peer-evaluation – students evaluate the attitudes, professionalism and quality of contribution of their teammates work. This can impact the overall grade by +/- 10 percentage points`.

Fit with other assessments on the programme/ module
A lot of work has been done to diversify assessments for Years 1 and 2. LMAP-1A incorporates a more innovative assessment type. The second-year continuation of the module (LMAP-1B) focuses on more exam-based assessments. The podcast therefore offers a more creative alternative which is appropriate for the type of skills that are assessed.

Practicalities

Preparing students for assessment
There are five aspects to preparing students to produce a podcast:

- Initial briefing which sets out the task and the requirements, i.e. what to include in the transcript and how to do it, go through an indicative podcast structure etc. The accompanying live session will also take a use-case based guide that shows students where and how generative AI may be used to support their work.
- Library support on how to search and review the evidence.
- A resource provided by the central college communications team that supports the students how to actually do the podcast in terms of recording, interview techniques etc.
- Topic-specific learning that builds on the core learning developed over the course of the year.
- Check-in office hours style appointments that students have with their topic lead (who is the person responsible for one of the 5 areas students explore).

When deciding on whether to provide specific guidance on video assessments in terms of the technology etc, it's useful to consider if there is a level of creativity involved in the task. If the purpose of the task is for the students to be creative, it is useful to give the students some freedom and not be too prescriptive with what tools to use and how. However, some students prefer to have some resources to rely on because they feel uncomfortable if they have to start completely from scratch without any guidance. The teaching team therefore needs to weigh in the emphasis on creativity (or its lack) and the nature of the cohort. It is useful to give students the freedom but at the same time provide a little bit of resources for those who want to consult them.

Overall the timetable includes scheduled time slots for the teams to come together, develop, record and submit their audio podcast, with opportunities to test and finesse their ideas with the topic leads.

Students are presented with an example podcast structure to follow. This includes:

- Welcome and introduction
- Description of scope/ subject matter and connection to lifestyle, health and/ or wellbeing
- Reflection on personal or professional experience of subject matter or behaviour change
- Review of the evidence base (using peer reviewed literature or other sources
- Synthesis and integration of the evidence with previously described experiences
- Concluding section drawing together the topic, summarising your conclusions and suggesting ways to improve the audience's health and wellbeing via lifestyle changes and potentially drawing on the behaviour change approaches you've covered earlier

Students are asked to submit a transcript alongside the podcast. Some indicative structure is also given in relation to the transcript:

- Timings to the nearest twenty seconds.
- Headings and high-level structure of the podcast.
- All words and content spoken within the podcast.
- References where applicable to evidence cited in the podcast

The transcript is put through to TurnItIn to flag plagiarism issues.

I think it's also important to make time for students to form their groups and to discuss how to work in a team. It can be a useful to incorporate a small task into the assessment, whereby students either reflect on how their group worked together and/or they produce a short document detailing how each member contributed. By making this explicit as part of the assessment, this can help to set expectations from the outset and stimulate some discussion about what constitutes a 'good' team.

When introducing group work some consideration needs to be given to how students with specific learning needs can be successfully participating in group interactions. All students involved should benefit from inclusive practice this means that inclusivity considerations can be embedded within standard practice around preparing students for group work. This can be done through discussion around the allocation of roles and better understanding how others, including those with specific learning needs such as dyslexia, autism, dyspraxia etc learn and communicate. Individuals should be mindful of that and think about the delegation of individual tasks that are appropriate to what individuals can do. Therefore part of preparation for group work is considering how others can be mindful and empathetic towards other group members.

Briefing students about the use of AI
Students will be explicitly briefed about what is considered appropriate and inappropriate use of AI for the purpose of this assessment. This briefing currently consists of the following points:

- Explanation that AI models are powerful and can be an effective way to check the quality of written work, prompt new ideas, or generate simplified explanations of complex topics to support your learning.
- A warning that submitting work and assessments

created by someone or something else, as if it was your own, is plagiarism and is a form of cheating and this includes AI-generated content.

The briefing will be developed further in the coming year.

It is important o factor in time for a meaningful discussion about how AI can be meaningfully and ethically used in preparation for assessment and how it can be appropriately referenced to avoid misconduct. In terms of the later, the library developed guidance around appropriate referencing.

There is also the Library's GenAI guidance that can be useful.

For students to take full advantage of AI they need to have a well-developed AI literacy. In addition to ethical use above, it also includes developing students' ability to use the tools critically and work with the tool to its bet advantage, for example through communicating with AI effectively. An example of a briefing that contains some elements of I literacy can be found in the downloads section of Reflective essay case study.

Assigning students into groups
Students (approx. 360) rank their preferences for each of five LMAP topics which are:

- Mental health
- Physical activity
- Nutrition
- Sleep
- Health and wealth

Students are subsequently allocated in random groups of five students by a best fit algorithm. Many of the students will not have worked with each other prior to this assessment. The students have freedom in what to explore within each area as long as it is linked to the theme of behaviour change, inequalities and population health.

Preparing students for peer assessment
After the podcasts have been submitted, students conduct a structured reflection activity that serves as preparation for peer feedback. They do this in their original tutor groups – in which they were placed

for the two terms preceding their elective podcast groups. This reflection focuses on what they learnt and what they did not learn. Then they are given a link to the feedback form which is based on three criteria – professionalism, attitude and contribution.

When including peer feedback it is important to ensure that students are in a position to provide meaningful feedback to their peers and if grading is involved, they fully understand assessment criteria against which they are marking their peers. This requires an element of formal discussion around what effective feedback is and what good, average and pass quality work in the context of this assignment looks like.

Marking arrangements

The assessments take place in person over two consecutive days and are scheduled for 20-minute sessions (that includes the podcast listening) with a five-minute interval for changing groups and conciliating marks. Five sessions run in parallel (one for each topic), and in sprints of 3 consecutive sessions followed by a break of 20 minutes for the assessors.

Students submit podcast as an MP3/4 file through Insendi with an accompanying transcript through Turnitin. The audio podcast will be marked by two independent markers. The podcast is worth 80% of the final module grade. Each podcast will be marked on the basis of the following rubric:

- Narrative structure and flow (15%)
- Reflective content: making reference to personal or professional experiences or perspectives where appropriate to the audience (25%)
- Understanding the impact of the chosen area on society broadly drawing appropriately on evidence and expert opinion (30%)
- Quality of the production (10%)
- An engaging and interesting podcast from the listener's perspective (15%)
- Comprehensive and detailed transcript (5%)

When deciding how students upload video files, it is useful to consider if there is potential reputational risk involved in having an assignment in the public domain, such as YouTube, and whether there are any GDPR issues around such an upload. If it's not sensitive content (for example assignments are more creative/ factual rather than reflective) and exposure could benefit the student, then an external platform could be considered. In general terms uploading to the learning management system allows to protect student identity, reputation and aligns with GDPR regulations.

Q&A are marked by two independent markers, taking into consideration where applicable:
- Understanding of the topic in question
- Critical appraisal of the evidence base
- Demonstration of contextual awareness
- Style of communication

Some considerations should also be given to how the Q&A is organised. For example one strategy could be pausing after a presentation and ask other to write down the questions to the presenters so that they have some time to prepare. This helps with the auditory processing side of things, i.e. not being able to recognise what needs to be done quickly by impeded understanding of what's being said; that is often present in a lot of disabilities. Speed of response is something which is part of a lot of neurological conditions. A combined approach of training/ practice before the presentation and an adjusted response system to questions that is put in place can really help students.

Peer assessment component is based on the following criteria: professionalism, attitude and quality and scale of input. Students will mark on a 5-point scale where 1 = lowest score and 5 = excellent.

The total evaluation score for a student will be divided by that group's average evaluation score. That value will be multiplied by the examiner's grade for the podcast to get the final individual score.

An important thing to consider is allowing for cases of mitigation so that students with extenuating circumstances who will be granted an extension can participate in the assessment. Same applies to students with disabilities, who also should have reasonable adjustments to be able to take the module and successfully complete their assessment.

Advantage of assessment type

- I was quite anxious about the audio podcast initially – and worried that the students may not engage. However, my anxieties were allayed when we had some super podcasts submitted in the first year. The standard has been very high in the subsequent years, although we do have some groups where clearly the group-dynamics are problematic.
- Innovative assessment method testing 'softer' skills. Watch this video for advice on introducing new innovative assessments.
- Students re going to have to work in a group no matter what they do. There are hardly any job descriptions that do not have a group working collaborative element. Being able to work in a group helps students develop related transferable skills.

Limitations of assessment type

- The commentary was the first piece of academic writing that the students had to do which meant additional preparation that students needed wasn't initially accounted for. This is no longer an issue with the new Q&A component.
- The revised Q&A approach will not allow for the same depth of assessment as the written commentary. However, students will have to be able to show application of knowledge to answer the questions.

Advice for implementation

- Assessing more than 300 students is a major challenge and you will need strong administrative and logistical support for assessment of this type – including IT support and ensuring that the day is logistically feasible. And then you need to find the assessors!
- Comparatively few students (and indeed groups of students) fail this assessment, but we did have to think carefully about what the resit arrangements would be – and students have to pass both the group and individual-components to progress.
- Make sure provisions for mitigation also put in place
- This type of more-creative assessment fits well in a broader assessment regime that does include more traditional knowledge-driven approaches including MCQs. The timing of the podcast – which takes place after the battery of MCQ assessments – is also important in ensuring that students are in a more creative mind-set, free of other assessment burdens in the summer term.
- Give consideration to how groups should be created. There are different approaches that could be followed, it is important to have a clear rationale for why you think your chosen approach works best given the circumstances.
- While important for all assessments, for 'non-traditional' approaches it is particularly important that both staff and students are clear on the purposes, benefits and expectations involved. Appropriate opportunities for formative assessment and feedback built into the programme / module design can be key in this;
- Using exemplars could be an effective means of preparation to manage students' anxieties relating to approaching assessments. It might also help to give clearer guidance / a breakdown structure to show how long they are expected to spend on each part of this. In cases where using examples of past student work is inappropriate, developing some 'sample' exemplars which could be used as a review exercise so that the students get a better idea of what 'good' performance looks like. Watch these videos: 1. What are exemplars? 2. Pros and cons of using exemplars 3. Strategies on how to successfully use exemplars
- Ensure that preparing students to work in groups effectively is part of your preparation for the assessment. This video outlines some strategies that can help you with that. Also this case study contains some examples of activities that you could use to help students work together better;
- Include inclusivity considerations when it comes to group working, for example include and explicit discussion of how specific learning difficulties

could affect group work to help students develop empathy towards those with different working patterns and styles;

- Consider inclusivity when it comes to questions and answers to allow students with learning needs to perform to their best ability.
- Ensure there are opportunities for alternative approaches to demonstrating assessment criteria for students with disabilities.
- Ensure students are thoroughly briefed about what is allowed and what constitutes misconduct when it comes to AI tools