



Prof Assess: A programme-based approach to building authenticity into assessment and feedback processes through consultation with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

Report: August 2025



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Objectives of the Project

Working in consultation with Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), academic teams, and students, the Prof-ASSESS project aimed to develop a sustainable approach to embedding authenticity within assessment practices, with a particular emphasis on programme-focused assessment. The project aims were:

- To build upon institutional collaborative relationships with PSRBs in the design of authentic assessments to increase validity, relevance and perceived usefulness of authentic assessment methods within different learning contexts
- To develop a programme-focused approach, aligned to TU Dublin's Quality Framework and Authentic Assessment Framework, to support individual's/groups' design of a coherent authentic assessment strategies designed to enable graduates to achieve desired programme learning outcomes
- To create a TU Dublin authentic assessment toolkit, aligned to a CPD framework for staff, and aligned to the development and recognition of graduate attributes for our students through the award of 'professional learning' badges

Research Team

The Research Team at TU Dublin was led by Dr Jen Harvey (Assistant Head of Academic Affairs – Learning, Teaching and Assessment) and supported by Nicole O'Neill (Education Innovation Manager), Dr Derek Dodd (Academic Developer) and Rachel Harding (Research Assistant, June – Dec 2023).

The team was supported by a Steering Group, chaired by Professor Brian Bowe (Head of Academic Affairs) and comprising Professor Siobhan Daly (Head of School of Physics, Clinical and Optometric Sciences) Dr Pat O'Connor (Head of School of Social Sciences, Law and Education) and Prof Sally Brown (Emeritus Professor at Leeds Beckett University) and James Lonergan (Director of Education & CPD, Society for Chartered Surveyors in Ireland). The Steering Committee met in September 2023 and April 2024 and provided invaluable guidance on the completion of the project.

Context

The project built upon earlier work conducted as part of the HEA-funded ‘IMPACT’ project: ‘Operation Authentic Assessment Transformation’. This initiative adopted a twin-track approach to supporting lecturers to innovate and transform their assessment practices through the establishment of a ‘Scholars and Supporters’ bursary and mentorship scheme, and a university ‘Authentic Assessment Community of Practice (CoP)’. Under the scheme, individual instructors (‘scholars’) and more experienced academic colleagues (‘supporters’) could apply for small bursaries to participate in a peer practice-exchange and mentorship programme aimed at developing *more* authentic assessments in their modules. This culminated in the development of eight assessment redesign case studies that would inform, alongside contributions from our CoP, a set of institutional guidelines, principles, and best-practice recommendations for authentic assessment across the university (our ‘Authentic Assessment Framework’). The initial idea for the Prof-Assess project and the development of a suite of resources that might support programmed-focused approaches to assessment, co-created with PSRBs and learners, emerged from discussions between the stakeholders in this initiative.

The Prof-ASSESS brought together TU Dublin programme teams in the disciplines of Architecture, Control Engineering, Optometry, and Law with their respective PSRBs.

The research conducted in this publication was funded by the QQI Anniversary Funded Projects on Assessment and Confidence in HE Qualifications included in the NFQ, 2023.

Participating Programmes and Professional Bodies:

Programme Team	Programme Lead	PSRB
Bachelor of Architecture	Dr Emma Geoghegan	Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) Ghinlon Wang
Bachelor of Science in Optometry	Declan Hovenden	CORU Marion Christiansen and Claire O'Cleary
Bachelor of Engineering Technology in Electrical and Control Engineering	Dr Catherine Deegan	Engineers Ireland Darren McCarty
Bachelor of Laws	Dr Deirdre McGowan	King's Inns Dr Eimear Browne and Marcella Higgins



Project Methodology and Timeline

Ethics Approval

Before formal commencement of the project, an application for Research Ethics Approval was made in January 2023 and final ethics approval granted in July 2023. A participant information sheet and consent form were also approved by the TU Dublin Research Integrity Committee.

Approach

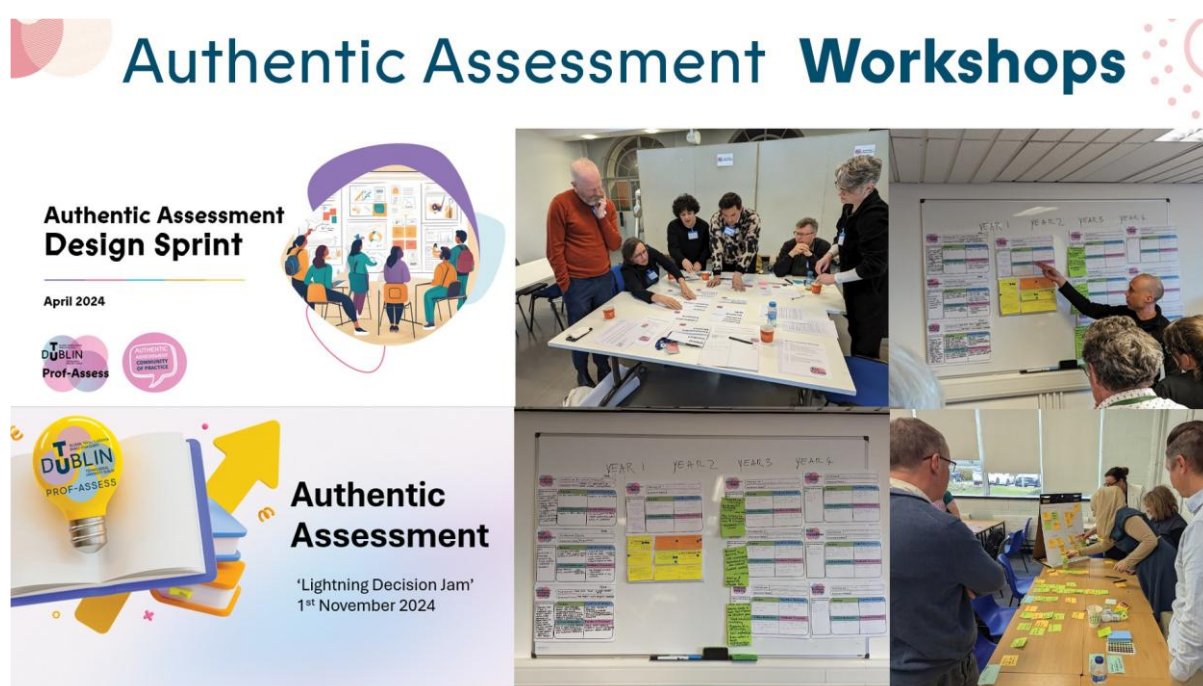
The project adopted an ‘appreciative inquiry’ approach, with the team working collaboratively with participating programmes to identify and build on strengths in existing assessment practices and stakeholder engagement across TU Dublin with a view towards developing a collection of resources and guiding principles for developing authentic assessment that reflected the diverse perspectives, pedagogical traditions, and innovative assessment practices of our institution’s constituent disciplinary communities.

The three initial programme teams chosen for the project were identified as programmes with a strong practical, work-related, and innovatively authentic traditions of assessment. By focusing on these programmes, all of which are professionally accredited, it was hoped that the learnings from the staff experience of implementing innovative assessments could be utilized to inform the development of a framework and resources that would support other academic teams to enhance the level of authenticity within their programmes. Latterly, a fourth programme: TU Dublin’s Bachelor of Laws (LLB) was included with the study as their programme team, together with their accreditation body and PSRB: King’s Inns, self-identified as having strong potential to enhance the authentic and innovative assessment practice within their degree.

Our inquiry focused on a series of interactive, face-to-face consultative workshops and a review of existing practice, which brought project participants together to develop and ‘road-test’ resources that would eventually make up our authentic assessment ‘toolkit’.

Literature Review

Preparation for the workshops was informed by a literature review undertaken by the project team, informed by seminal works and input from authentic assessment experts including Professor Sally Brown, Kay Sambell, and Lydia Arnold. A ‘literature lexicon’ which provides plain English explanations of ten key authentic assessment terms and links to key sources, and which offers a glossary for our four-dimensional authentic assessment framework, can be found [on our site here](#). This is not intended as an academic review, but as a supportive resource that can be easily understood by any member of our broader teaching and learning community.



Workshop 1

The first workshop, which took place on April 20th 2023, brought together our partners from TU Dublin Academic Affairs, Engineers Ireland, RIAI, CORU, and three participating TU Dublin programmes: the BEngTech in Electrical and Control Engineering, BArch Architecture, and BSc Optometry and a representative from the QQI. Participants engaged in a lively morning of exploratory discussion about our understandings of ‘authenticity’ in assessment, graduate outputs and key competencies, existing assessment approaches on our participating programmes, and authentic assessment task design. This workshop provided professional bodies and academic programme teams with an invaluable opportunity to develop a shared understanding of “What Authenticity Means to Them” and how it can be used to support the development of professional competencies and graduate attributes. It also provided an opportunity for

programme teams and PSRBs to develop a shared understanding of the language of assessment. This workshop informed the development of the TU Dublin Authentic Assessment Definition and Framework ([available here](#)) which can be used by programme teams to consider the indicators of Authenticity with their programme.

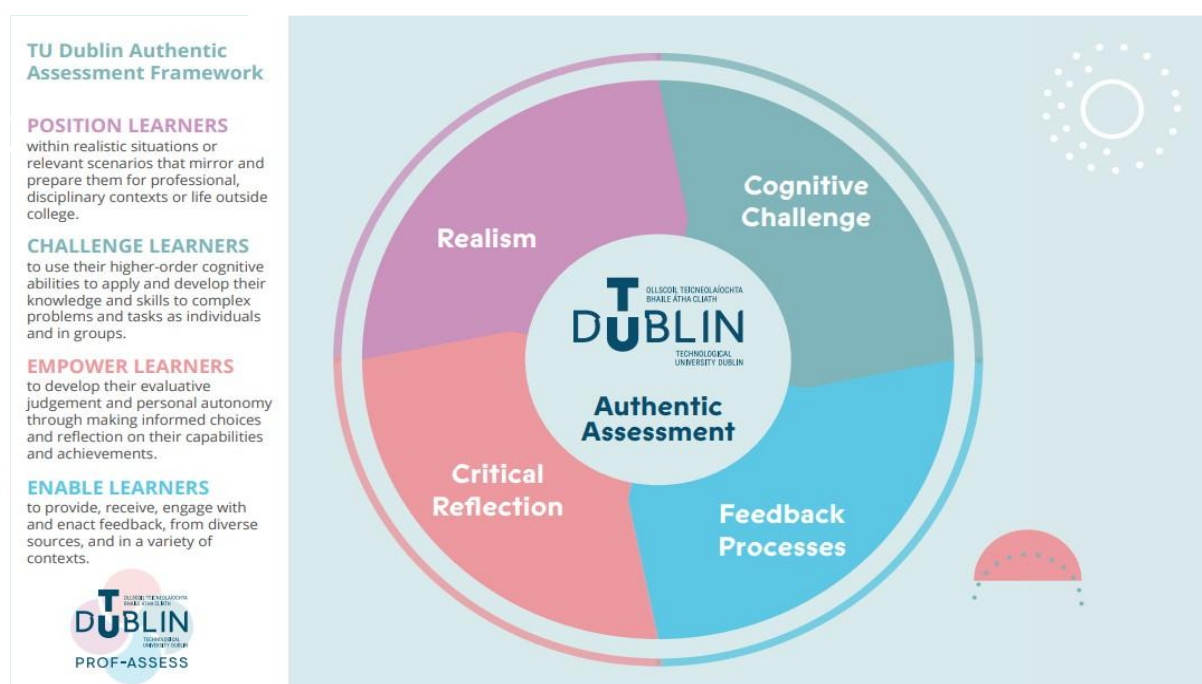
Masterclass

A supporting Authentic Assessment Masterclass was held on May 11th 2023, in which the project hosted Professors Sally Brown & Kay Sambell for a lively and well-attended session by both members of the programme teams in the project, members of the Community of Practice and other academic staff with an interest in Authentic Assessment. This masterclass provided invaluable opportunities for staff to discuss examples of different forms of assessment and how their authenticity can be enhanced to improve student engagement and learning. This workshop provided a range of practical options and ideas as to how authenticity could be enhanced within their assessments and provided the project team with evidence as to what tools would be most useful in an Authentic Assessment Toolkit.



Workshop 2

On Tuesday the 12th of September 2023, the second workshop of the Prof-ASSESS Project was held. This workshop was attended by the Heads of School/Discipline and faculty members from the Schools of Architecture, Building and Environment, Physics, Clinical and Optometric Sciences, and Electrical and Electronic Engineering. At this workshop attendees engaged with the draft Authentic Assessment Definition and Framework to enhance our shared understanding of Authentic Assessment, and to provide input to help the project team refine the next iteration of these resources. Participants also tested an Authentic ‘Radar Diagram’ activity as a means to quickly determine the level of authenticity of specific assessments within a programme and explore opportunities for their development.



Review of Existing Practice

After this workshop, the research team worked with the programme teams to consider the level of authenticity in assessments across their programmes. An authenticity radar was the key tool that was used to inform the review. The work enabled programme teams to identify the key areas that they would like to make changes in their assessment or to reinforce their understanding of the elements of assessment on the programme and facilitated the programme chairs to have informed discussions with specific module lecturers on specific assessments. As the radar diagram was individually administered it facilitated a self-reflection and enabled lecturers to fully consider the aspects of their assessments and how they align to the authenticity indicators. It also enabled programme teams to provide feedback on the tool and its usefulness, and to provide feedback on the other supporting material that they would like to have. The programme teams proactively used an Authenticity Radar Diagram to get a sense of how the level of authenticity of each assessment contributed to the overall authenticity of assessment within each programme year.

Authenticity Radar

REALISM

Authentic assessments position learners within realistic or problem scenarios that mirror professional contexts and life outside college.

COGNITIVE CHALLENGE

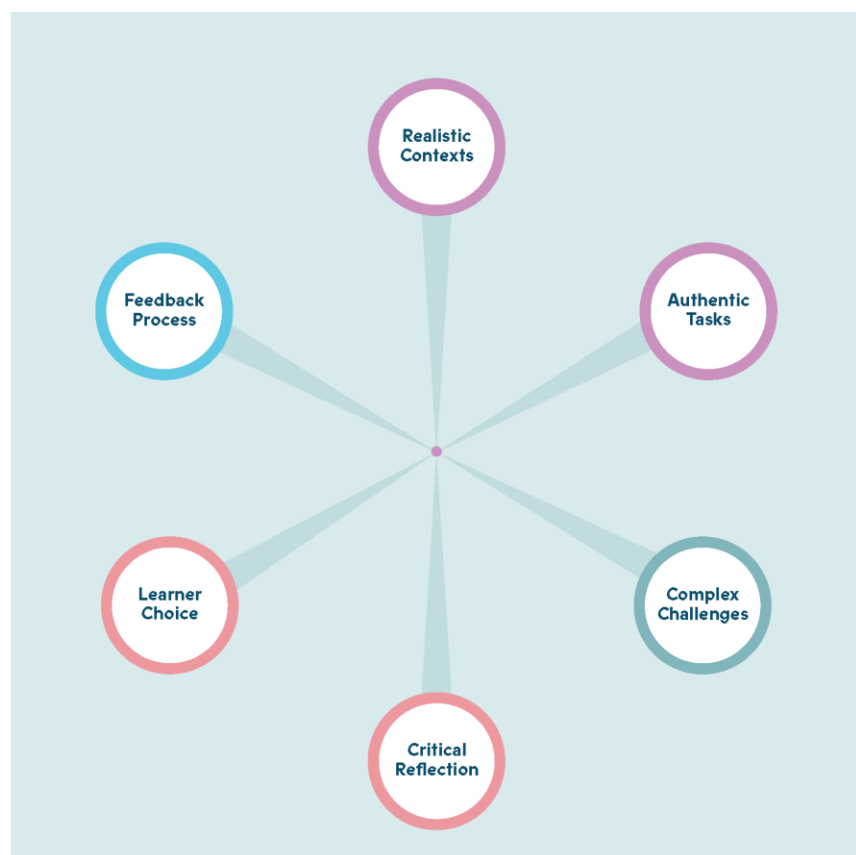
Authentic assessments ask learners to use their cognitive abilities to apply their knowledge and skills, to solve problems as individuals or as part of a group.

CRITICAL REFLECTION

Authentic assessments provide learners with opportunities to personalise tasks and engage in reflection on their understanding, performance and decision-making.

FEEDBACK PROCESSES

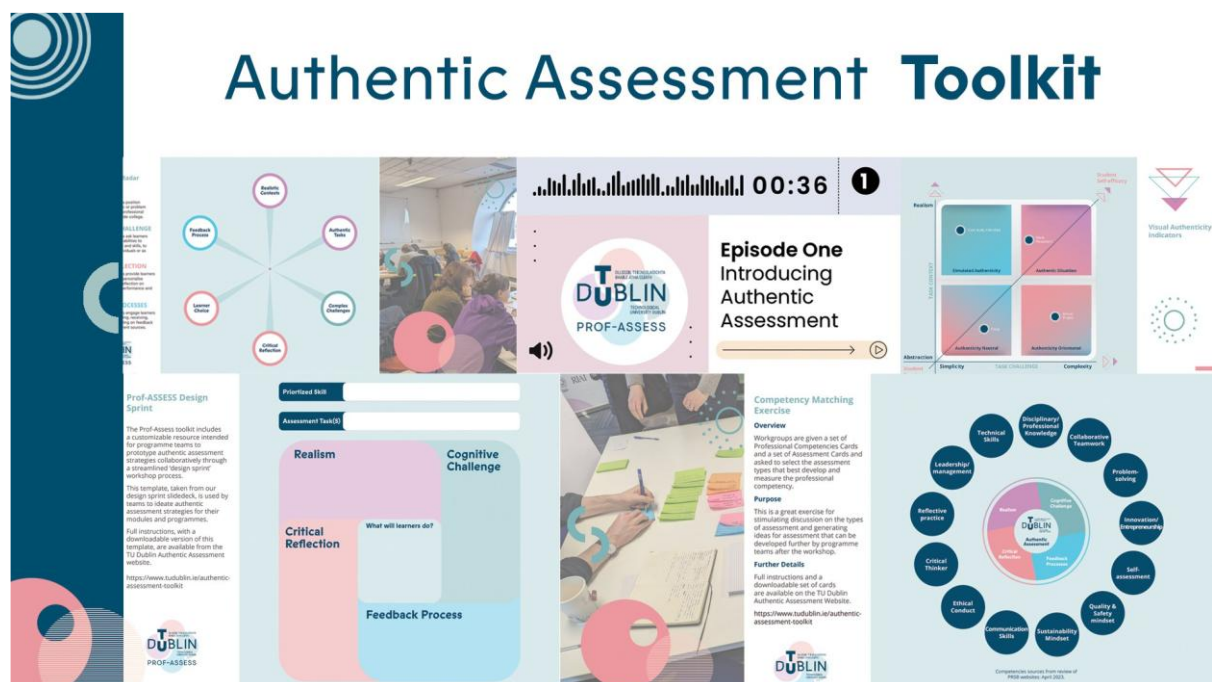
Authentic assessments engage learners in processes of providing, receiving, engaging with and acting on feedback from a variety of different sources.



Development of Toolkit

Feedback from the workshops and review of existing practice led to the development of a range of resources for the Authentic Assessment Toolkit. This included led to the development of detailed authentic assessment rubrics ([available here](#)) which outline the requirements of emerging (low), developing (medium) and mature (high) authentic assessment approaches that align to each of the dimensions of the framework and to the development of a checklist, visual trajectories and quadrants.

The team also reached out to members of the programme teams and the Authentic Assessment Community of Practice to develop a broad selection of Authentic Assessment Exemplars on different assessment types to be included in our toolkit to provide examples of how different types of authentic assessment can be developed and their impact on student learning. The purpose of the exemplars is to provide inspiration to other lecturers who are thinking about changing their assessment types, to show that student engagement can be enhanced by using authentic assessment practices and show how assessment practices can be refined and improved sequentially over time. The Exemplars are available on our Website at: <https://www.tudublin.ie/explore/about-the-university/academic-affairs/lta/lta-resources/authentic-assessment-toolkit/why-use-authentic-assessment/>



Showcase for Learning and Teaching

In January 2024, Authenticity was a key theme for the TU Dublin Annual ‘Showcase for Learning and Teaching’. ([details available here](#)). The showcase is an opportunity to celebrate innovation in teaching and learning and provides a forum for academic staff to share their practice, their challenges and success. In 2024 it was attended by over 120 people and included over 29 oral presentations and 20 poster presentations from which highlighted an area of innovative practice. It also featured a keynote presentation ‘Authentic Assessment Unpacked’ ([presentation slides](#)) in which Professor Lydia Arnold explored and challenged the concept of authentic assessment, by outlining the different definitions and usage of the term “authentic”. Lydia’s presentation identified key benefits and challenges, and offered a set of strategies for ‘nudging’ our assessment practices to ‘become more authentic’.

By including an authentic assessment keynote within the Showcase, this increased the reach of the project but also reinforced the message to staff that Authentic Assessment is important and provided clarification of on the meaning of authentic assessment. One of the key comments made by the audience was that they use authentic assessment for their classes with small numbers but that it is not possible to use authentic assessment with larger classes. This prompted a robust discussion with the audience and inspired the development of the resource in the toolkit “Ideas for enhancing authenticity in assessments for large classes” ([see here](#)).

It also highlighted that there is a significant concern amongst some academic staff that there is an increased workload when implementing authentic assessment compared to traditional written examinations and this is an ongoing challenge that will need to be addressed. More evidence needs to be provided to staff to show that the extra workload in redeveloping assessments is worth it, due to its impact on student engagement or to show them ways that authenticity can be enhanced without significantly increasing their workload. This keynote also inspired the development of the Small Steps ([see here](#)) resources in the Toolkit. Acknowledging that radically changing an assessment completely might increase workload or may make an academic apprehensive about making changes, that authenticity can also be enhanced by making a small change.

Expansion

In February 2024, at the request of the Programme Chair and The King's Inn, the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) programme team joined the research project, and workshops were provided for the programme team and their professional body using tasks and activities refined from the earlier workshops. By including a programme that had a strong focus on written examinations and essays within the programme, this provided the project team with an opportunity to reconsider the workshop resources and approaches that had been used with the programme teams that had a stronger tradition of more practical (authentic) assessment.

It was agreed that the provision of specific examples from the legal discipline to the programme team would be useful and the project team did a literature search and shared a number of research papers with the programme team about the implementation of authentic assessment in the legal discipline. Prof Scott Slorach, Director of Learning and Teaching at [York Law School](#) provided a webinar on Authentic Problem Based Learning, which was attended by King's Inn, members of the LLB programme team and other interested staff across all TU Dublin Campuses. The talk outlined the approach taken to assessment in York Law School, which focuses fully on Problem Based Learning, it outlined how students are informed about the benefits of this approach prior to their arrival. The inclusion of Legal Studies in the programme has planted seeds about the role and benefits of authentic assessment and in time it is hoped that more authentic assessment practices will be introduced to the programme and that there will be a larger diversification of assessment on the programme.

Since the end of the project, workshops utilising the resources from the Prof Assess toolkit have been provided to the Digital Marketing Programme Teams in both Tallaght and Blanchardstown, to assist them in their assessment re-design considerations in advance of their programme review which is due to take place later this year.

Podcasts

In May 2024, semi-structured interviews were recorded with authentic assessment experts, academic programme leads, and PSRB representatives on the topics of understanding and operationalizing authentic assessment and partnering on assessment strategy between programme teams and professional bodies.

The decision to develop podcasts was taken as there is a wealth of written material available on Authentic Assessment and the project team felt that it would be good to provide a variety of material in the authentic assessment toolkit and that many people might relate well to material presented in an oral and discursive fashion. Developing the podcasts enabled the program team to explore concepts of authenticity and provided a

good insight into the participants' views on the role of authentic assessment. There were three different groups of participants interviewed for the podcasts: academic practitioners in TU Dublin, external experts on Authentic Assessment and representatives of PSRBs.

A wealth of information is contained within these podcasts and they show the very diverse perspectives of the different disciplines and signal areas where there are barriers to implementation of some types of authentic assessment practices and where there are opportunities to further utilize authentic assessment approaches. For example, King's Inn clearly state that they have a requirement for in-person assessment so that they can be-assured that the person is producing their own work, but would welcome assessment approaches that utilizes more authentic methods within this in-person constraint.

Content in these podcasts also reinforces the importance of critical reflection for developing professional competency. They also show the importance of integrity and problem-solving for professional competence, interestingly the experience of Engineers Ireland is that they are now seeing the results of changes in assessment introduced about 5/6 years ago in terms of graduate competence in Problem Solving. The podcasts are useful for getting an understanding of the perspectives of PSRB on their role and how involvement in this project has reinforced that there is potential if there were opportunities for more three-way conversations about assessment between employers, PSRBs and academics. This is something that could be factored into future projects.

Image of descriptions of Authentic Assessment Podcasts

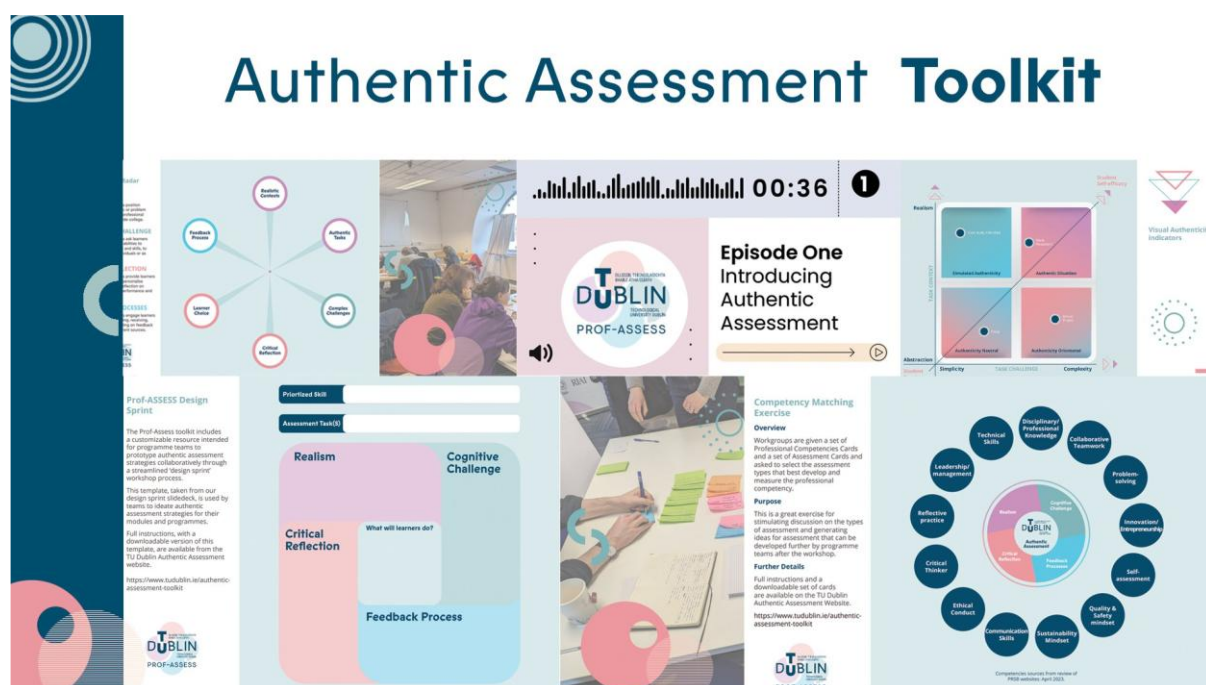
Authentic Assessment Podcasts

Episode One Introducing Authentic Assessment 	Episode Two Employing Authentic Assessment 	Episode Three Partnering on Authentic Assessment 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With our AA experts Profs Sally Brown, Kay Sambell, and Lydia Arnold.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With TU Dublin academics in Architecture, Engineering, and Law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With our AA Experts and reps from engineers Ireland, King's Inn and SCSi.

These recordings have been used to create a three-part podcast miniseries on authentic assessment. Each episode can be accessed below and will be published publicly on popular podcast platforms pending consent from all participants. Work is also underway to convert audio snippets from the podcast recordings into interactive prompts that will be embedded into our toolkit and digital badge at a later date. Summaries of each episode can be found on authentic [assessment toolkit page](#).

Authentic Assessment Toolkit Development

From December 2023 – June 2024, the project team concentrated on exploring the outputs of the workshops and using this to develop and refine the resources to be included in the Authentic Assessment Toolkit and PSRB Consultation Guide. The project team prioritized the development of a Podcast series and Visual Resources that could be used both independently by individuals and in structured workshops and which would inspire discussion about the different elements of authenticity. The resources were developed as printable resources for use in person workshops but could also be implementable in electronic workshops and could be filled in electronically. It was also agreed to develop a digital badge which would recognize those who engage fully with the resources.



Project Findings/Outputs

The inquiry undertaken for this project highlighted the importance of dialogue between academics, employers and PSRBs to develop a shared understanding of the different ways professional competencies can be developed within a programme and validly assessed.

The study highlighted that one singular assessment within a module or programme cannot address all the professional competencies and authenticity requirements required for programme and demonstrated the importance of taking a programmatic approach to assessment, so that skills and student self-efficacy can be scaffolded across a programme using a balanced and integrated assessment strategy.

Through a process of appreciative enquiry, it was demonstrated that a range of alternative and creative approaches to assessment, that enhance student learning, have already been adopted across our university's programmes, but that there is a need for structured opportunities, and supportive resources, to assist academic teams to convene and collaborate on programme-focused approaches to authentic assessment, with input from their respective PSRBs.

The main outputs developed from this project are:

- **An agreed TU Definition of Authentic Assessment**
(Note: this is a new definition arising from this project which built on a previous working definition from the National Forum. The new definition includes a stronger alignment with the TU Dublin graduate attributes and was informed by workshops held with the programme teams and PSRBs which discussed the role of authentic assessment in developing Professional Competencies)
- **An Authentic Assessment Framework**
(Note: This Framework was adapted from and built upon. A first iteration was developed under the IMPACT funded 'Operation Authentic Assessment Transformation' project and associated CoP. The original framework had four dimensions: Realism, Metacognition, Feedback Process, and Cognitive Challenge, through the Prof-ASSESS exploratory workshops and review of PSRB materials, it was decided to change Metacognition to Critical Reflection which aligns more clearly with Professional Competency frameworks and is more easily understood as term. It was subsequently decided after testing of the framework through the project, to adapt the framework to being more student-centered and the framework descriptions were altered to describe how each of the four dimensions of the framework impacts on learners e.g. Positioning Learners (Realism), Challenging Learners (Cognitive Challenge), Enabling Learners (Feedback Processes) and Empowering Learners (Critical

Reflection). The timeline is outlined on pages 5-6 Authentic Assessment Toolkit. The new framework also reflects recent critical debates in the broader literature, supported by the project's participants, that place greater emphasis on the holistic development of learners and on life-wide learning and resilience instead of a narrower focus on work-readiness and fidelity to current professional practice (more information on this can be found in our literature lexicon).

- An Authentic Assessment Toolkit
- The development of Authentic Assessment Digital Badge

The Authentic Assessment Toolkit is both a printed booklet (digital copy available in the support documentation) and a website resource (<https://www.tudublin.ie/authentic-assessment-toolkit>) and it includes:

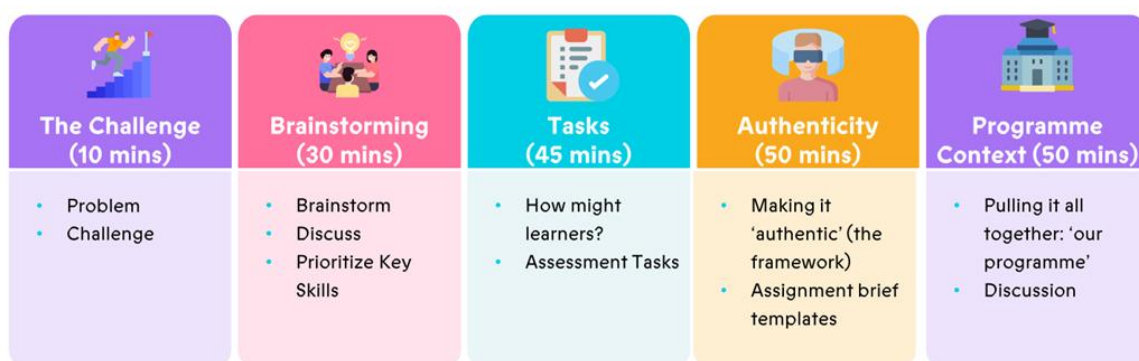
- **Tips on why more authenticity could be introduced into assessment.**
Note: This was extracted from shared experiences of colleagues
- **Workshop Tasks** that can be used by individuals and programme teams to support them to increase the authenticity of assessment as a continuum across a programme.
Note: the workshop concepts that have been utilized by others e.g.
 - *Diamond Nine is a well-used ranking system,*
 - *Radar Diagrams are also a well know technique for showing progress on multiple dimensions and have been used by the University of Liverpool for auditing assessment tasks),*
 - *The Competency Matching exercise takes the Competencies from a review of PSRB websites in April 2023 and takes the Assessment Types from the resources outlined on sally-brown.net.*
 - *The Design Sprint Workshops resources were specifically designed to align to the Authentic Assessment Framework,*
 - *The visual authenticity indicators were specifically tailored to align with the framework*
 - *The assessment examples used are types of assessment used within TU Dublin.*
- **Examples and exemplars of Authentic Assessment.**
Note: This was all collated as part of Prof Assess Project from both the specific programme teams involved in the project but also from the wider Community of Practice
- **An Authentic Assessment Rubric.**
Note: Newly developed rubric to indicate how much different elements of assessment align to the Authentic Assessment framework dimensions
- **An Authentic Assessment Checklist.**
Note: Newly developed to provide a visual checklist for assessment elements to align with the framework dimensions

- **Tips on how to take small steps to enhance authenticity.**
Note: Newly developed resource but was informed by previous experience of colleagues
- **A Podcast Series**, which includes a PSRB consultation guide.
- **Taking a programmatic approach to developing a continuum of authenticity across a programme**, including a programme mapping tool.
Note: Newly developed but built on concepts of continuums developed by the National Forum

Workshop Resources

Resulting from this work, the project team developed a suite of collaborative workshops for teams to develop authenticity in their programme assessment strategies: a three hour or half/day ‘design sprint’ and a shorter, 90-minute ‘lightning decision jam’. Each of these resources, which have been added to the toolkit as reusable slide-decks, will also be offered as facilitated workshops for TU Dublin programme teams, and are intended to provide opportunities for programme teams to engage in structured brainstorming and rapid problem-solving activities related to authenticity in programme-focused assessment.

Design Sprint Structure



In December 2023, the longer ‘Design Sprint’ model was tested with a diverse audience of academic staff and teaching and learning experts, with the audience broken into ‘year groups’ for a notional academic programme and charged with developing authentic assessment prototypes that aligned with identified core competencies and were appropriate for their respective stage. One outcome of this workshop was an open educational resource, in the form of a slide-deck and supporting materials, that can be used by any programme team to develop authenticity in their course offerings. This slide-deck, and the shorter ‘lightning decision jam’, are components of our toolkit. The shorter

‘lightning decision jam’ model was tested on Friday, Nov 4th 2024 by teams involved in the revalidation of digital marketing programme in TU Dublin’s School of Business seeking to explore the development of more authentic assessments in their course offerings.

These workshops can be accessed, as reusable slidedecks with accompanying instructions, on the [‘workshops’ section](#) of our toolkit website.

Another outcome arising from the December 2024 workshop was a sample continuum as to how Authentic Assessment in specific skills can be developed over a 4 year programme.

On Friday, 30 May 2025, an interactive online workshop entitled ‘Building Authenticity into Assessment’ was delivered to twelve lecturers. The session revisited key theory and practice in authentic assessment, introduced participants to the TU Dublin/Prof-ASSESS Authentic Assessment Framework, and facilitated reflection on current assessment approaches. Participants applied one of the framework’s dimensions to an existing assessment before collaborating in groups to critically explore its application within their own disciplines and contexts.

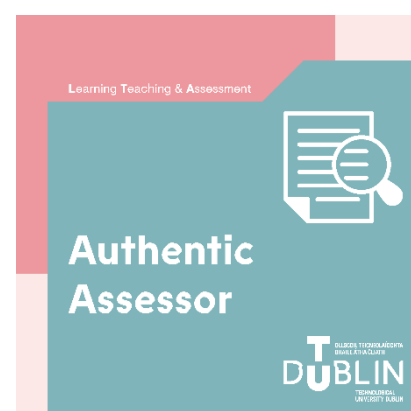
It is planned to offer this workshop on an ongoing basis throughout the academic year.

On 7 May 2025, as part of the Student-Centred Assessment event at the Grangegorman campus, a parallel workshop introduced ten TU Dublin staff to the TU Dublin/Prof-ASSESS Authentic Assessment Framework. The session provided an overview of the framework and definition, along with group activities that encouraged participants to share examples of practice, recognise existing alignment with the framework’s dimensions, and explore ways to increase authenticity in assessment and within their programmes.

Digital Badge

The Authentic Assessor Digital Badge utilizes the resources developed for the Toolkit to support Academic Staff to develop their authentic assessment practices. On completion of this Badge, participants will be able to:

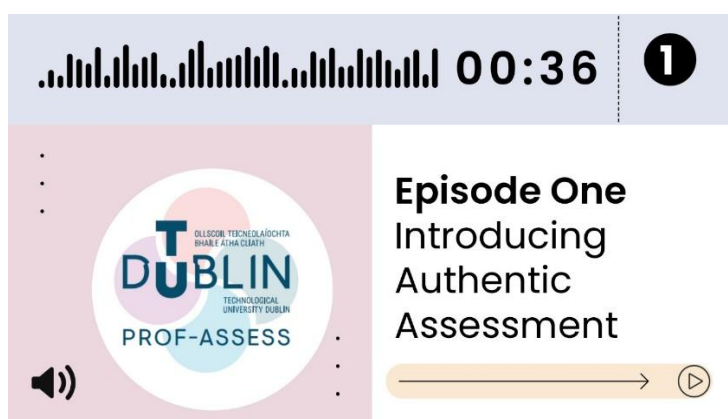
- Review a current module’s assessment design against Authentic Assessment Framework
- Discuss different ways to enhance authenticity within assessment processes
- Identify appropriate interventions to improve authenticity in different assessment tasks
- Critically explore strategies to enhance authenticity within their assessment practices



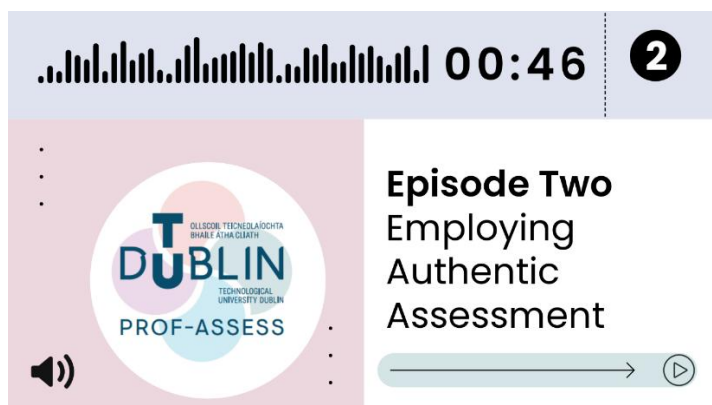
- Justify, through a process of reflection, proposed changes in the assessment of a current module to achieve appropriate authentic assessment.

The Digital Badge materials were incorporated into the Assessment workshops described in the Section above and into an Assessment and Feedback micro credential which is due for validation in October 2025.

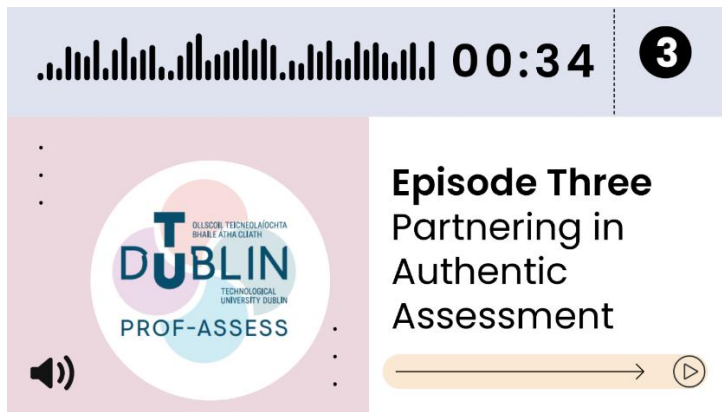
Podcast Links



https://tudublin.canto.global/v/lta/allfiles?from_main_library&viewIndex=1&column=audio&id=84m2rl0pct2jt5dlp7a1n7bk6m



https://tudublin.canto.global/v/lta/allfiles?from_main_library&viewIndex=1&column=audio&id=6j54i7ahtd2hf7dg89906c1a7n



https://tudublin.canto.global/v/lta/allfiles?from_main_library&viewIndex=1&column=audio&id=bke4lskkk15h3a130ak02n522n

The podcasts are currently awaiting publication on commercial streaming platforms, pending the finalisation of a new media strategy for TU Dublin's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Team. Once this strategy is in place, the podcasts are expected to be integrated into an official LTA podcast series, scheduled for launch in 2026. The podcast material will also be integrated into a new, publicly accessible TU Dublin Teaching Portal currently in development by the LTA, to be provisionally launched in late 2025.

Conference Presentations

Outputs from this research were reported at

18th International Technology, Education and Development Conference, Valencia, Spain. 4-6 March, 2024. A Programme Based Approach to Building Authenticity into Assessment and Feedback Processes Through Consultation with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, R. Harding, D. Dodd, N. O'Neill, J. Harvey - *INTED2024 Proceedings* - pages 5139-5145.
<https://library.iated.org/view/HARDING2024APR>

The AHE Network Conference, Manchester, 'Prof-ASSESS: Developing a Programme-Focused Framework for Authentic Assessment at Technological University (TU) Dublin.' D. Dodd, N. O'Neill, J. Harvey,
<https://ahenetwork.org/international-ahe-conference-2024/>

Advance HE Assessment and Feedback Symposium on 5th November 2025, 'Programme-focused Authentic Assessment Toolkit', N. O'Neill, D. Dodd

Advance HE Using the Framework for Enhancing Assessment Webinar 'Programme-focused Authentic Assessment Toolkit', N. O'Neill, D. Dodd, 4th December 2024

Conclusion and Implications

There is shared agreement between academics and PSRBs in this study that there is an importance to developing professional and transversal skills and competencies, such as communication skills, problem solving, and critical thinking as well as core discipline specific skills. There is also a shared agreement that traditional, time-based written closed book examinations are not always the most appropriate method to develop these skills and that a range of authentic assessment practices need to be included across a programme to develop these required skills.

There is a strong preference amongst the project's participants for a more holistic understanding of authenticity that is not restricted to preparing learners for specific professional contexts and employability but takes account of the need to ensure that assessments benefits learners individually by preparing them to become resilient, life-long learners who can achieve success in a range of different working and learning contexts within their lives (hence the adoption of the term 'lifewide learning' within our authentic assessment framework).

Whilst there is strong agreement that authentic assessment supports student engagement and development of personal skills that are required to become proficient life-wide learners, there are several barriers preventing the further adoption of authentic assessment practices which include:

- Time constraints and perceptions of increased workload when introducing new practices
- Concerns related to academic Integrity and the perception that invigilated examinations are the only way to ensure that the student is producing their own work without assistance
- Perceptions that PSRBs require a high focus on invigilated closed book examinations
- Perceptions that quality assurance processes do not facilitate the changing of assessment types
- The perception that there is an ease of administration around the traditional examination process as opposed to assessments, which need to be scheduled and spread out across a programme

Further work is required to dispel these perceptions and to provide further evidence of the positive impact of authentic assessment on student learning and engagement, thus to encourage more programme teams to engage further in authentic assessment practices and share their experiences of its impact on student learning and achievement.

Key References

- Ajjawi, R., Tai, J. Dollinger, M., Dawson, P., Boud, D. & Bearman, M. (2024) From authentic assessment to authenticity in assessment: broadening perspectives, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 49:4, 499-510, DOI: 10.1080/02602938.2023.2271193
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