

Assessment Case Study 2:

Students in your department undertake an MSc which involves writing a 20 000 word dissertation. In addition, students are required to deliver an assessed oral presentation about their research project to a mixed audience of academic staff and students. There is an oral (viva voce) element required with some follow up questions.

Suggested inclusive adjustments:

- Give the student the option to make a full or partial video presentation or the traditional option of presenting it in person. The video option will be played back with the student present.
Choice is good. The alternative option – presentation /video – supports memory issues recall. Argument could be made that students should be pushed to try things they are not comfortable to stretch their skills. Is presenting part of the core competences of the course?
- After the presentation or video the audience (or key viva staff) are given a short amount of time to write down initial questions.
Written questions gives multi sensory/ re-enforcement. Also it reduces the reliance on memory. A student will not generally forget the whole question but could forget a key word/phrase that changes emphasis. The time extension necessary could lead to over run, particularly if a number of students choose the alternative option. Students may have difficulty accurately reading handwriting.
- Either the student (or the viva staff) leave the room to allow the student an extended time for reading and formulating responses.
This provides extended time to compensate for processing speed problems. There are issues with how the downtime is used/ filled.
- The student or viva staff return for the answers to the written questions.
Staff can read their questions aloud for context. Enables others to hear the question and judge the response in context.
- Follow up questions are dealt with by the student 'on the spot' or the option is given for a later e-mail response.
Is it better to expect the student to try to answer some follow up questions or does switching to the pressurized immediate response defeat the object of the alternative means of assessment?