

## Off-Campus Assessments for AY 2023/24 update: 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023

For AY 2022/23 the **Off-Campus Assessments Working Group proposal** (Appendix 1) was approved by the Learning and Teaching Academic Year Group on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The approval set out in detail the operational approach to be taken for the full calendar year for assessments taken by online/IDL students as well as students taking assessments at the university's JEP Partner institutions.

Following on from the paper **Assessment Guidance for AY2023-24** (Appendix 2), approved by the Learning & Teaching Academic Operations Committee on 19 April 2023, which clearly sets out the HW assessment platforms for AY2023-24 for exams, coursework, the discontinuation of some previous HW assessment types and a recommendation for innovation in assessments utilising existing HW systems, this paper sets out the arrangements by way of an update to the Off-Campus Assessment Proposal from AY2022/23.

i. Online/Independent Distance Learning (IDL):

HWO Final Online Assessment may be either 2/3 hrs or 24/48 hrs, 1 week etc. as specified by School. The course teams, however, must ensure that their assessment is designed to be fit for purpose, e.g., it is not appropriate to use an assessment designed for a 2/3 hrs fixed timeslot and make it available for 24/48 hrs. For course teams designing assessments for 24/48 hrs window, the assignment should take approximately 4 hours of student effort for a 24-hour window or 8 hours of student effort for a 48-hour window. The course teams must also ensure that detailed and clear instructions, and preparation support, are provided to students on the format and expectations around final online assessment. If any course has different assessments for on-campus and off-campus, appropriate moderation should be in place to ensure that both assessments are of the same quality, academic standards are identical and student performance can be effectively compared.

ii. Joint Education Programme (JEP)<sup>1</sup>:

We will continue to allow in-person invigilated time-limited examinations in JEP partner institutions only (not for other partners such as ALPs) under HWU examination conditions. Note in year 2022/23, JEP Partner TUST had held TOCs in both Semesters 1 and 2 due to constraints in hosting in-person exams at TUST as they emerged from local Covid lockdowns.

iii. Non-JEP Partnerships:

Non-JEP Partnerships will continue to hold final online coursework assessment using the parameters set out in the Assessments Guidance paper approved by the Learning & Teaching Academic Operations Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023 (Appendix 2).

### Important points to note:

For reference, the following items below which were key items to note from the previous working groups discussions but still apply.

- The working group proposes only one type of assessment, i.e., HWO Final Online Assessment to be used for Online/IDL students in AY 2023/24. Due to the restrictions in accessing appropriate venues in-person invigilated examinations should not be considered. Also, no budget exists for hosting in-person invigilated examinations for online students nor is there a desire to return to such format as part of Heriot-Watt Online's vision for the future of online student provision.
- It was noted that if Schools want – or are required to have – identical assessment types for all students, then timed, final online assessment should be used for both on-campus and off-campus provision.
- It was noted that if any PSRBs require in-person invigilated exams across all modes and locations, formal letters from the PSRB's are to be submitted to Schools and AQ first for verification/endorsement. AQ will in turn liaise with relevant colleagues in RAS.

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<sup>1</sup> List of JEP universities: 1) Ocean University of China (MACS & EPS), 2) Xidian University (EPS), 3) TUST: Tianjin University of Science and Technology (EPS)

- As part of preparations for AY 2023/24, each School is currently engaged in determining the most effective assessment arrangements for its discipline areas in alignment with the University's Regulations, the revised Structure of the Academic Year and established quality frameworks.
- If any course has different assessments for on-campus and off-campus, appropriate moderation should be in place to ensure that both assessments are of the same quality, academic standards are identical and student performance can be effectively compared.

### HW Online/IDL

- Schools should have flexibility to be able to, due to practical limitations and pedagogy reasons, choose the duration of their final online assessment within the specified timeframes the School sets, i.e., 2/3/24/48 hrs periods
- Time zones have already been utilised in AY2022/23 for Timed Online Coursework set for timed periods of 2 and 3 hrs duration. This practice will continue in AY2023/2024 for HWO Final Online Assessments.
- If a School wishes to have identical forms of assessment for on-campus and online, then they cannot provide an in-person exam since there is no opportunity to run in-person exams for online students in 2022/23.

### JEPs (Joint Educational Partnerships)

- JEP partners (Xidian, Ocean and TUST) should all return to on-campus invigilated examinations.
- Xidian and Ocean have successfully returned to in-person exams in AY2022/23.
- The decision to allow in-person exams to be run at, and invigilated by, JEPs has been made based on the trust HWU has in the quality assurance processes of our partners so therefore, it may not be required for any of HWU staff to travel China.
- RAS will continue to communicate with JEP partner institutions regarding the HWU examination guidelines and protocols and obtain their written agreement to follow the HWU examination protocols as per standard university practice.

## Appendix 1:

### Off-Campus Assessments Working Group Proposal for AY 2022/23

The function for the management of off-campus exams, as previously run by the International Centre for Exams (ICE) within EBS, has been rationalised and incorporated into Registry and Academic Support (RAS). But due to the institutional savings exercise in 2020, there is no longer a budget to run off-campus in-person exams through British Council venues or in partner organisations approved (through a commercial agreement between the partner and ICE) to run in-person exams. Although this working group recommends this be looked at for the future, there is insufficient time to resolve issues of budget, expired agreements with British Council and with partners to be able to offer in-person exams by December 2022. Following NSS 2022, we do not recommend changing any methods of assessment mid-way through this academic year. It was suggested by Professor Malcolm Chrisp, the chair of LTAYG, for this working group to meet and consider different aspects of off-campus assessments for the full calendar year and propose a solution to the LTAYG by correspondence by Friday 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2022. The working group, which was comprised of all Schools' DAQs, Head of Academic Quality, Global Academic Registrar, Quality and Academic Partnerships Manager, Head of Off-Campus Students, and Academic Head of HW Online, met on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2022, and discussed and proposed the following options for AY 2022/23 only:

iv. Online/Independent Distance Learning (IDL):

We propose to continue to allow flexibility for Schools to choose the duration of their Timed Online Coursework (TOC), either 2/3 hrs or 24/48 hrs. The course teams, however, must ensure that their assessment is designed to be fit for purpose, e.g., it is not appropriate to use an assessment designed for a 2/3 hrs fixed timeslot and make it available for 24/48 hrs. For course teams designing assessments for 24/48 hrs window, the assignment should take approximately 4 hours of student effort for a 24-hour window or 8 hours of student effort for a 48-hour window. The course teams must also ensure that detailed and clear instructions, and preparation support, are provided to students on the format and expectations around TOC. If any course has different assessments for on-campus and off-campus, appropriate moderation should be in place to ensure that both assessments are of the same quality, academic standards are identical and student performance can be effectively compared.

v. Joint Education Programme (JEP)<sup>2</sup>:

We propose to continue to allow in-person invigilated time-limited examinations in JEP partner institutions only (not for other partners such as APL's) under HWU examination conditions.

### Summary of Discussions:

For reference, the following items summarise the working group discussions:

- The working group proposes only one type of assessment, i.e., TOC to be used for Online/IDL students in AY 2022/23. Due to the restrictions in accessing appropriate venues in-person invigilated examinations should not be considered.
- It was noted that if Schools want – or are required to have – identical assessment types for all students, then timed, online coursework should be used for both on-campus and off-campus provision.
- It was noted that if any PSRBs require in-person invigilated exams across all modes and locations, RAS should be contacted and informed as soon as possible.
- There remains a concern about the reputation damage of not addressing the perceived quality issues associated with online assessments, particularly around academic misconduct, but it was acknowledged this is a transition year, and more critical work is under way by the *Transforming Assessment Group*, which will feed into Off-campus Assessment with a long-term proposal. It was also acknowledged and discussed that a wholesale return to in-person, invigilated examinations is not practicable nor indeed desirable for all online provision, and that in-person examinations are not the only mechanism for ensuring academic integrity.
- The working group acknowledged and noted that, for AY 2022/23, each School is currently engaged in determining the most effective assessment arrangements for its discipline areas in alignment with the University's Regulations and established quality frameworks.

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<sup>2</sup> List of JEP universities: 1) Ocean University of China (MACS & EPS), 2) Xidian University (EPS), 3) TUST: Tianjin University of Science and Technology (EPS)

- It was noted that current MBA assessments/examinations (particularly those for the legacy courses, as it now is under the HWU assessment policy) is under review. EBS will soon, before designing their assessments, identify what change is required in the short-term to ensure academic integrity (e.g., including short term fixes such as only allowing students to submit Word documents not handwritten/photographed/pdf, including additional reflective writing, asking students how they would apply what they have learnt from the course to the workplace).
- The working group would like to emphasise that if any course has different assessments for on-campus and off-campus, appropriate moderation should be in place to ensure that both assessments are of the same quality, academic standards are identical and student performance can be effectively compared.
- The working group would like to remind all Schools and course teams involved of the possibility of a future lock down, and RAS will be proposing protocol to handle such situations to address any local lockdown within the Campus (or JEP) network.

### HW Online/IDL

- There is no intention to review the University Regulations and the associated HWU Assessment Policy (which already embodies the principle of allowing Schools to choose the most effective means of assessment) – the discussion is around how this is implemented for online students in 2022/23 when there is no possibility of in-person exams.
- Schools should have flexibility to be able to, due to practical limitations and pedagogy reasons, choose the duration of their TOCs within the above agreed, i.e., 2/3/24/48 hrs periods
- It was noted, by the Global Academic Registrar, that if Schools opted for 2/3 hrs TOC, more time zone assessments must be prepared, e.g., up to 6 time zone assessments depending on whether these are the same / different assessments as for on campus students. This was acknowledged by the relevant Schools, who were already used to preparing papers for multiple time zones.
- It was noted that for EBS the first-generation courses all cease this academic year, with a view to having a clear approach to online assessment in place for all continuing courses by the end of 2022.
- If a School wishes to have identical forms of assessment for on-campus and online, then they cannot provide an in-person exam since there is no opportunity to run in-person exams for online students in 2022/23.

### JEP

- It was noted that all JEP partners are requesting returning to on-campus invigilated examinations.
- There is already at least one example, i.e., Xidian University, which invigilated our assessments during the previous academic year.
- The working group noted that there is still more work required to be completed to agree on the operational details of how to send the exam papers and answer books and receive them from the JEPs, but it was acknowledged that as a longer-term solution, the process would benefit from an improved design of answer book and ultimately using of automated systems such as [gradescope](#) which can be considered as an innovative and longer-term solution.
- It was noted that this decision to allow in-person exams to be run at, and invigilated by, JEPs is made based on the trust HWU has in the quality assurance processes of our partners and that, therefore, it may not be required for any of HWU staff to travel China.
- RAS will write to JEP partner institutions with the HWU examination guidelines and protocols and obtain their written agreement to follow the HWU examination protocols.

### Discussed and proposed by:

Tessa Berg (MACS), Louise Delicato (SoSS), Chris Dodd (SoSS), Paul Hopkinson (HW Online), Laura Johnston (Academic Partnership), David Kelly (Off-campus Students), Margaret King (Academic Quality), Helen Lever (EGIS), Bill MacPherson (EPS), Mehdi Nazarinia (EPS, Chair), Rabee Rustum (EGIS), Paul Travill (RAS)

# Parameters for Off-Campus Assessments in 2022/23

## The Reality

The function for the management of off-campus exams, as previously run by the International Centre for Exams (ICE) within EBS, has been rationalised and incorporated into RAS.

BUT ...due to the institutional savings exercise in 2020,

There is no longer a budget to run off-campus in-person exams through British Council venues or in partner organisations approved (through a commercial agreement between the partner and ICE) to run in-person exams



There is insufficient time to resolve issues of budget, expired agreements with British Council and with partners, to be able to offer in person exams by December 2022



Following NSS 2023 results, we do not want to change method of assessment/exam mid-way through the year



Therefore, the only option for off-campus provision is Timed, Online Coursework (former take home exams) for 2022/23



### For Approval

#### FOR APPROVAL

The Working Group needs to summarise its recommendations **by Friday 9 Sept** in a written paper and submit this to the Global Academic Registrar, who will share it in turn with the RAS Heads and the LTAYG Chairs.

The proposal will then be sent to the LTAYG for approval by correspondence and then communicated to Schools.

Schools will then discuss and agree their forms of assessment and add that to the GCM spreadsheet.

### For Discussion by the Working Group

#### FOR DISCUSSION

Timed, Online Coursework: the University Policy allows for the 2- or 3-hour format OR 24-or 48-hour window.

**The Working Group needs to reach a view on whether this flexibility should continue to be offered for Off-Campus provision (online and partnerships) in 2022/23 OR whether there should be one format only**



#### FOR DISCUSSION

There is a possibility that in-person exams could be run only for JEP Partnerships in 2022/23 (the strategic level partnerships in China) and that those JEP partners would then run in-person exams in 2022/23 in accordance with HWU specifications.

**The Working Group needs to reach a view on whether or not this should be offered.**



The University policy allows different forms of assessment across modes and locations, so Schools could have in-person exams for on- campus and timed, online coursework for off-campus.

If Schools want – or are required - to have identical forms of assessment across off-campus and on-campus, then their on-campus method of assessment will also have to be timed, online coursework for 2022/23.

Identical forms of assessment might be a requirement of PSRBs. RAS needs to be contacted asap if PSRBs are insisting on in-person exams across all modes and locations.

## APPENDIX 2:



Transforming Assessment @HWU Learning & Teaching Academic Ops

Committee

19<sup>th</sup> April 2023

### Assessment Guidance for AY23-24: Items for Approval

This paper provides an update on actions to develop assessment guidelines for AY23-24. Following discussion at March LTAOC, further development work has taken place across three areas.

- Technical parameters [e.g. Platforms available for assessment]
- Operational parameters [e.g. Timelines for assessment details to be updated, timetabling parameters]
- Pedagogic considerations [guidance on assessment decisions and design].

Key issues and specific proposals for AY23-24 have been discussed by DLTs, LTMG and UCLT. LTAOC

is asked to note this update paper and

- **APPROVE the proposed platforms for assessment,**
- **APPROVE the introduction of a defined cut-off date for updating** assessment information,
- **ENDORSE the next steps** for roll out and support.

#### 1. Context

- 1.1 AY22-23 marked a transition year for assessment across the Heriot-Watt community as we stepped forward from pandemic-adjusted assessment. The AY22-23 assessment suite included a return to on-campus examinations alongside some legacy examination methods which served purpose when in-person examinations were impractical.
- 1.2 As we look ahead to AY23-24 it is time to review and streamline the assessment models to ensure that we have a consistent and stable approach for the future. This will allow clear guidance to teaching teams on:
  - **Assessment Platforms** (Canvas, Gradescope, campus spaces and other options available to teaching teams, with clear guidance on what types of assessment each is most suitable for.)
  - **Operational parameters** (timetable for teaching teams to notify assessment types and format, assessment & exam scheduling parameters).
  - **Pedagogic considerations** (Guidance on assessment decisions and design, study support for students, promoting academic integrity by design).
- 1.3 It is proposed that clear assessment guidance be developed and made available to teaching teams in May 2023 to allow appropriate time for programme and course teams to review and, where required, refresh assessment for AY23-24.
- 1.4 It is recognised that transforming assessment requires a phased approach, with AY23-24 a year of stabilisation in the operation of assessment alongside a drive for continued enhancement and innovation in assessment and feedback design.
- 1.5 Further development of platforms, operations and pedagogic approach will progress for

AY24-25 to secure a stable, long-term approach to assessment.

## 2. Context: Connecting Operational and Strategic Aspirations

- 2.1 This work connects operational improvements and strategic enhancement activity as we step forward with the Transforming Assessment work.
- 2.2 **The Transforming Assessment** change initiative is a key pillar of the learning and teaching strategy implementation work, interfacing with the Heriot-Watt Global Changemaker Curriculum Framework, Globally Connected Learning model and efforts to transform the Academic Architecture (academic year and programme architecture). The overarching aspiration is to ensure that assessment:
- Supports learning across a programme of study.
  - Encourages learning and application of knowledge & skills.
  - Is authentic to discipline and real-world contexts.
  - Encourages and supports students to apply feedback to future learning.
  - Strengthens a culture of academic integrity.
- 2.3 The operational delivery of assessment will have at its heart a focus on student wellbeing, ensuring a clear, well-communicated process that allows them to effectively demonstrate their learning. Staff wellbeing and workload will be aided by effective and efficient processes for assessment and feedback development.
- 2.4 This initiative will connect together a range of activities including staff development, student support, policy review, assessment systems, process development, and a review of learning technology for assessment, in order to create a coherent assessment agenda for the University alongside focused, context-specific implementation plans.

## 3. Preparing for AY23-24

- 3.1 To ensure the timely development of assessment plans for AY23-24, institution-wide parameters are being reviewed and refreshed. School-specific communications and guidance can then be offered to programme and course teams.
- 3.2 Institutional decisions to be agreed and endorsed by LTAOC are:

<p><b>A. Platforms for Assessment</b></p>	<p>Appendix A sets out the details of the proposed platforms for assessment and changes in nomenclature for assessment type (notably removing the use of the term ‘Timed Online Coursework’).</p> <p><u>Summary of Recommendations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adopt the outlined coursework platforms as the only coursework platforms to be used for AY23-24 onwards.</li> <li>2. Adopt the outlined exam platforms as the only examination platforms to be used for AY23-24 onwards.</li> <li>3. Discontinue the exam platforms ‘Timed Online Coursework’ and ‘Canvas-based digital exams’.</li> </ol>	<p>LTAOC is asked to review and <b>APPROVE</b> this proposal.</p>
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	<p>4. Coursework may be set up to end of week 14.</p> <p>5. Approve the principle that innovations in assessment should seek to make use of existing HW assessment platforms in the first instance.</p>	
<p><b>B. Defining Operational Parameters and timelines</b> for coursework and examination</p>	<p>Two key actions will unlock greater clarity and efficiency of assessment and examination operations. LTAOC are asked to endorse:</p> <p>1. There will be a fixed date for all key assessment information (exam/coursework weighting) to be correct in GCM from Week 0 of September semester for the whole academic year.</p> <p>2. Acad Ops / Exam Team to develop and communicate process and the AY23-24 assessment operations calendar to Schools (and LTAOC) in May 2023.</p>	<p>LTAOC is asked to review and <b>APPROVE</b> this proposal.</p>

3.3 Following LTAOC approval of these parameters, the next steps action will be:

- Development of an integrated guidance note on preparing assessments for AY23-24, to be made available on the [Curriculum and Assessment Design Toolkit](#) and the Getting Ready for AY23-24 SharePoint sites.
- Development of operational timeline and guidance note on updating of assessment information and exams and assessment preparation schedule for AY23-24.
- Modelling of examination diet to 2 and 3 week schedules and decision re April 2024 assessment diet length (2 or 3 weeks).
- School-level communication and support.
- Development of student guidance and timeline of communication.



## Appendix A

### HW assessment platforms AY23-24

#### Context

This paper outlines for LTAOC approval the **recommendations on platforms for assessment** which will provide a stable basis for Heriot-Watt assessments going forward. Once the platforms are approved, guidance to staff on the most appropriate assessment type for each platform will be provided. Guidance on assessment or question design is already available from the LTA (see <https://heriotwatt.sharepoint.com/sites/Ita/SitePages/Assessment-and-feedback.aspx>).

The recommendations presented here apply to all Heriot-Watt taught programmes, including Heriot-Watt Online. Relevant DLTs and Heads of Service have been consulted in the development of these recommendations.

#### Accessibility

Reasonable adjustments should be made to coursework and exams as identified by the Disability Service. Where relevant IS and the Disability Service should be consulted for advice on the best means to ensure the accessibility of the platform.

#### Recommendation 1: Approved HW Coursework Platforms.

LTAOC are asked to approve the following platforms and how they may be used for assessing coursework:

- Canvas assignments<sup>1</sup>
- Canvas quizzes
- Canvas graded discussions
- Gradescope assignments (selected courses only)
- In-person assessment e.g. practicals, vivas.
- EBS student portal / Turnitin (HW Online courses only)<sup>2</sup>

These assessment platforms:

- May be used for formative and summative assessment.
- May be used for assessments of any length e.g. specified timeframe for completion (e.g. 3 hour, 24 hour, 48 hour, 1 week etc), specified deadline, open-ended.

The selected platform type should be appropriate to the assessment type. Guidance on the types of assessment which are most effective on each platform will be provided.

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<sup>1</sup> Heriot-Watt Online courses which are hosted in Canvas will utilise Canvas assignments or Canvas quizzes to provide 'HWO Final Online Assessments'

<sup>2</sup> Heriot-Watt Online courses which are hosted in Connectus will utilise the EBS Student Portal / Turnitin to provide 'HWO Final Online Assessments'.

## Recommendation 2: Approved HW Exam Platforms.

LTAOC are asked to approve the following platforms and how they may be used for holding and assessing exams.

The recommended platforms for examinations are:

1. Handwritten exams conducted in an 'exam hall' and invigilated by a person(s).
  - a) Closed book.
  - b) Provided data only e.g. formulae.
  - c) Open Notes (i.e. can bring own notes but not textbooks etc).
  - d) Open book (i.e. nominated textbooks and other material, as appropriate).
  - e) Gradescope-marked exam.
2. Online exam hosted on Canvas quizzes and conducted in an 'exam hall', invigilated by a person(s).

The above platforms should only be used for assessments which are designated as exams in GCM. The selected exam platform should be appropriate to the assessment type.

3. Viva examinations (e.g. for the examination of Masters dissertation or PhD thesis) may be conducted in-person on-campus or via Teams.

## Recommendation 3: Discontinuation of some previous HW assessment platforms / types.

It is recommended that previous HW use of assessment platforms be discontinued as follows:

- a) **The 'exam' type 'Timed Online Coursework'** is discontinued. Where a Course Team feel that a timed piece of coursework is required (at any point in the semester) this may be as outlined in the coursework options above.

**Rationale:** Removing this 'assessment platform' reduces potential confusion for students because all coursework is in one place on their normal course site on Canvas and these assessments are clearly designated as 'coursework'. It also reduces workload for academics in production and set-up of assessments and for RAS and IS in creating additional assessment sites on Canvas and managing additional assessments.

**Additional information:** As noted in the coursework section, Course Teams and Heriot-Watt Online can continue to use timed coursework, however this will be set up and delivered as coursework, not a pseudo-exam. Heriot-Watt Online timed assessments will be called 'HWO Final Online Assessments' (or another name to be agreed with HWO before the start of AY23-24).

- b) **Canvas-based digital exams** are discontinued. Where a Course Team require an invigilated exam, they should utilise either the handwritten invigilated exam platform or the Canvas quiz invigilated platform. This ensures that exams are properly invigilated and exam questions are written appropriately for the context of the exam.

## Recommendation 4: Coursework may be set up to end of week 14.

Course teams may set coursework up to the end of week 14, subject to the following guidance:

- There may not be a coursework deadline and an exam on the same day within the same course.
- Course teams should ensure that students have sufficient time to prepare for any coursework or exams, cognisant of the full suite of assessment students are undertaking in this period.
- Course teams should be cognisant of the impact of any extensions required for reasonable adjustments and should not set these within student holiday periods.
- Programme teams should guard against assessment bunching across the programme.

Further guidance on coordination of assessment and examination submissions for AY23-24 will be offered by Acad Ops / Examination Team in May 2023.

### **Recommendation 5: Innovation in assessment should by default seek to utilise existing assessment platforms.**

HW assessment platforms (as identified above) provide scope for further innovative practices and developments in assessment. It is recommended that the principle of seeking to utilise our existing assessment platforms (rather than seeking to purchase new platforms) in the first instance is adopted. Where existing platforms are identified as not meeting a specific need this should be flagged to the Learning Technologies Steering Group for further exploration.

### **Summary of Recommendations for approval by LTAOC:**

1. Adopt the above coursework platforms as the only assessment platforms to be used for AY23-24 onwards.
2. Adopt the above exam platforms as the only examination platforms to be used for AY23-24 onwards.
3. Discontinue the exam platforms 'Timed Online Coursework' and 'Canvas-based digital exams'.
4. Coursework may be set up to end of week 14.
5. Approve the principle that any innovations in assessment should seek to make use of existing HW assessment platforms.

### **LTAOC are asked to note: Future Developments**

Platforms will continue to develop as will our assessment needs and practices, therefore the Learning Technologies Steering Group under the co-chair of the LTA and IS will continue to keep assessment platforms and needs under review, proposing developments as required.