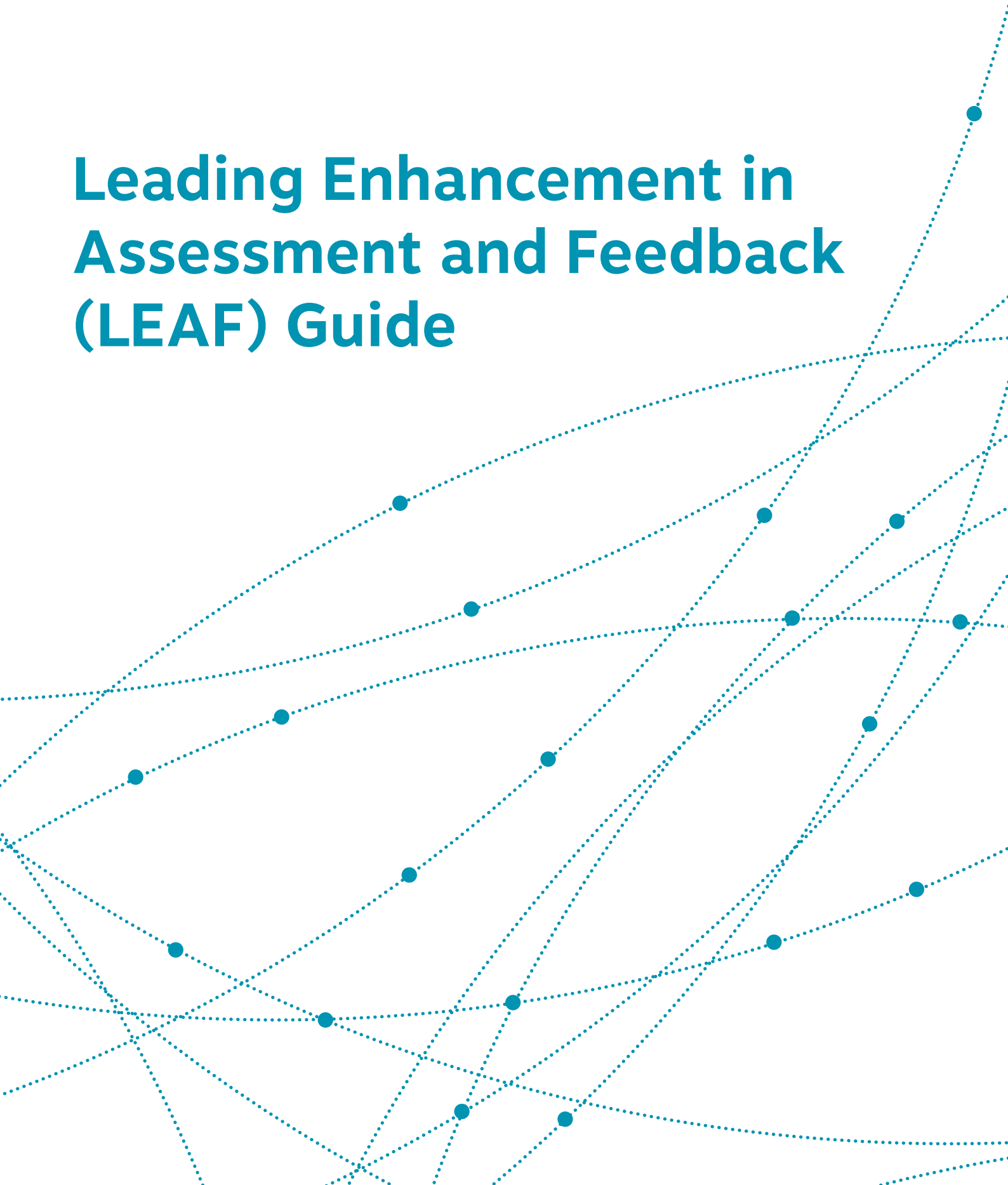
THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

INSTITUTE FOR ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) Guide



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Introduction

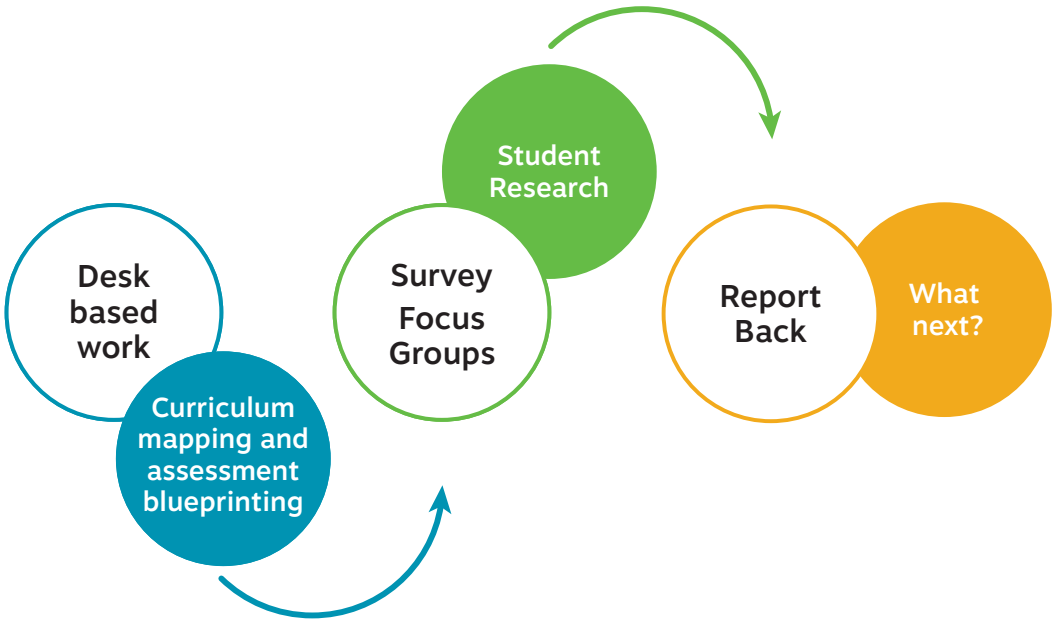
The Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) initiative at the University of Edinburgh enables programme teams to capture the typical experience of assessment and feedback on their programme using the **Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment (TESTA)** methodology, developed through a National Teaching Fellowship project, led by the University of Winchester. TESTA is a reflective process, providing a birds-eye view of assessment and feedback on a programme, facilitating reflection and discussion, whilst also identifying and sharing good practice. Completing the LEAF process can help Schools to highlight patterns within assessment and feedback practices, such as bottlenecks, proportions of formative assessment, or over-reliance on particular forms of assessment. Some Schools have found it useful to complete the LEAF process in the year before a Taught Programme Review or a curriculum review.

Part 1 The programme team conducts curriculum mapping and assessment blueprinting using existing programme information.

Part 2 The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) undertakes a survey using questions from the TESTA survey, supplemented by some University of Edinburgh specific questions, and any questions that the programme team wish to add.

Part 3 The IAD facilitates focus groups with students on your programme.

Part 4 The IAD collates the information collected in Parts 1, 2 and 3 into a report with commendations and recommendations for enhancing assessment and feedback practice in your programme.



The first step in the process is to contact the LEAF team at the IAD at **iad.assessfeedback@ed.ac.uk** with any queries you may have, to express interest in undertaking the LEAF process, and to check IAD availability for support Parts 2, 3 and 4. Completion of part 1 of the LEAF process is the responsibility of the programme team, whilst parts 2, 3 and 4 are completed by the LEAF team in IAD with the support of the programme team. IAD's involvement can include providing reassurance to student participants about their anonymity and confidentiality within the LEAF process, as well as offering an external perspective.

Part 1: Programme details and mapping assessment and feedback (to be completed by the Programme Team)

1.1 Defining the programme

The 'Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment' (TESTA) methodology is designed to be used on degree programmes with a clear pathway and defined structure. As some University of Edinburgh programmes offer students a lot of flexibility to choose what they study, it is useful to first map out the numbers of compulsory and optional courses that students on a programme will study.

? **Action 1:** Edit Table 1 using the **Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS)** website to reflect the number of compulsory credits, optional credits within the discipline, and optional outside courses that students are asked to select. In some degree programmes this will be a range: e.g. 20 – 40 credits from within the discipline.

Table 1: Programme structure

Programme Name				
	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year
Compulsory courses	Number of credits	Number of credits	Number of credits	Number of credits
Optional courses from within the discipline	Number of credits	Number of credits	Number of credits	Number of credits
Optional courses from outside the discipline	Number of credits	Number of credits	Number of credits	Number of credits

All tables in this document can be downloaded in an editable format from:
https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/assessment/leaf

Owing to the flexibility within many degree programmes, for the purposes of this project you may need to generate a typical pathway through the programme that adheres to the format set out in Table 1, so that you can understand a typical student's programmatic experience. This takes us to the next step in the process, which is to complete Table 2, which captures the typical courses selected by students on your programme.

Action 2: Generate a typical student's pathway by completing Table 2. Please use the previous year's Key Information Sets (KIS) data gathered annually by the University to select a suite of courses to comprise a typical pathway through the programme. Select courses that are the most popular whilst also being compatible with the programme structure in Table 1. Your School should have a copy of your KIS data, but if you have any trouble tracking it down please contact: **iad.assessfeedback@ed.ac.uk**

Table 2: Most popular courses taken on the programme

Programme Name					
Course	Semester	Credits	Compulsory (C)/ Elective (E)	Course Organiser	Course Administrator
Year 1					
Year 2					
Year 3					
Year 4					

1.2 Mapping assessment and feedback

Once you have identified these courses, you can begin to map the assessment and feedback on your programme. The aim of this is to:

- Gain an overview of assessment and feedback practices students will experience during their degree programme.
- Visualise the timeline of assessments in order to observe how course deadlines operate together at a programme level.
- Identify areas of good practice, which can be showcased for colleagues.
- Look at course assessment and feedback practices, and intended programme-level learning outcomes, to reflect on potential areas for attention and action relating to assessment and feedback methods.

? **Action 3:** Begin to map the assessment and feedback on your programme using Table 3 to gather and record assessment and feedback activities from course organisers, for each of their courses on the programme. You can either discuss practice with course organisers and then fill out the following sheets, or you can email the sheets to course organisers asking them to complete the sheets.

Table 3: **Overview of course assessment activities**

Single Course Name					
What assessments are used on this course? (place one per row)	**Is the assessment formative, summative, or both?**	**What percentage of a students' grade is determined by this assessment? If none write n/a.**	**How is the student prepared for this assessment?** (Do you have a question and answer session? Do students email you? Have they completed this type of assessment on other courses and is it therefore familiar?)	**What feedback do students receive on their assessed work?** Examples: - Do they get feedback or just a grade? - Is the feedback individual, group or class generic? - Is the feedback written, in-person, audio, video? - Is the feedback designed to be used on their next piece of assessed work i.e. they have to be able to state how they have used their feedback to improve their work? - Who writes the feedback (permanent lecturing staff, graduate tutors, etc)? - How do students receive feedback? (face-to-face, by email, on Grademark, etc). - Is it returned within 15 days?	**How much contact time do students on this course have?**

Once you have collected details of the assessment and feedback activities for all courses it is helpful to collate this to give a sense of the volume and diversity of assessment tasks used across the programme as a whole. This can be done by completing Table 4.

Action 4: Complete Table 4 to collate the course information you have gathered. This will allow you to see the full diversity of assessment students experience each year.

Table 4: Summary of assessment on the programme

Programme Name	List all types of assessment for compulsory courses	List all types of assessment for elective courses	How many different types of assessment were used on the programme in this year?	How many summative assessments were used on the programme in this year?	Percentage of grade for the year comprised by exams
1st Year					
2nd Year					
3rd Year					
4th Year					

Bottlenecks of deadlines can cause problems for both staff and students. It can be helpful to visualise the timeline of when all the different kinds of assessments take place on your programme.

Action 5: Use Table 5 (on the following page) to map out the assessment deadlines for each year to visualise where these fall, using different colours for the different types of assessment used and marking the week where the assessment occurs. You should complete one table for each year of the programme. If you wish, you are free to edit the assessment types and colour coding key to better reflect the assessments used on your programme. Please add additional rows if needed.

Key to Table 5

	Exam		Dissertation
	Essay		Presentation
	Poster		Quizzes
	Report		Short written task
	Written group work		Test
	Literature comprehension		Scientific article
	Assessed problem		Portfolio

Table 5: Assessment timeline

Year 1 – Programme													
Semester 1	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	December Diet	
Course 1													
Course 2													
Course 3													
Semester 2	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	May Diet
Course 4													
Course 5													
Course 6													

1.3 Observations from assessment mapping

After completing Table 5, you are nearly ready to move to Parts 2, 3 and 4 of the LEAF process. The next parts centre upon the voices and experiences of your students. In order to balance these student perspectives with staff perspectives it is useful to try to draw together an overview of staff perspectives of some of the strengths and challenges of current assessment and feedback practices. Although there are some suggestions here of topics you may wish to include, please do not feel limited by these suggestions.

- **How expectations are managed:** research suggests that simply reading written assessment criteria will not ensure that students have a clear idea of what they are meant to do for their assessment and how to achieve good quality work.
- **Whether students get opportunities to practice:** when students are starting a new assessment type or are stepping up the difficulty of their work it is useful to give them time to practice in a low stakes, formative environment.
- **The full range of assessments used on the programme:** University of Edinburgh courses are often very good at developing written communication skills, however other skills such as verbal or visual communications may be not so strongly focussed upon. It is useful to look at programme learning outcomes and checking whether students are provided with systematic opportunities to build the full range of skills you hope they will develop across the degree programme as a whole.
- **Whether feedback provides a call to action:** encouraging students to take action on feedback and improve their practice. Sometimes students see feedback as a critique of their work without a clear course of action they can take to improve their work in future.

Once you have completed these reflections, please share them with IAD LEAF staff and we will include this in the final report alongside the student data: iad.assessfeedback@ed.ac.uk

Part 2: The Survey

(Led by IAD with support from School)

The questions used in this part of the LEAF process are taken from the survey designed by the TESTA team (www.testa.ac.uk) with additional free text questions to address some University of Edinburgh specific issues and to give us some further helpful information. We are happy to add or amend questions in the survey to meet the needs of your School, to do so please contact: iad.assessfeedback@ed.ac.uk

The survey will be administered using the Online Surveys tool. Once the questions have been confirmed with the programme contact, a survey and a link to the survey will be generated. The LEAF team will then send this to you with a template email to be sent to the students on the programme that you wish to be surveyed. Some programmes do not wish to send the survey to their final year students due to the close proximity with the National Student Survey, some programmes prefer it to be sent to all students excluding first years due to their lack of exposure to assessment and feedback practices. Your wishes should be communicated with the LEAF team in advance. It is expected that the programme team will send out the survey and that one or two reminders will be sent to students' subsequently to ensure maximum participation. We recommend that the survey should be open for around 4 weeks.

2.1 Survey questions

Background questions

a. What is the title of the degree you are studying?

b. What is your average achievement for courses on your degree subject so far?

c. What is your year of study?

d. What is your average achievement for your outside courses so far?

e. What is your gender?

f. How old are you?

g. Do you consider yourself disabled?

h. Are you recommended to receive support (learning adjustments) in assessments by the Student Disability Service? (Filter question)

i. Has this support been implemented by your School? (Filter question)

j. Is there any further information you would like to tell us about the implementation of your assessment adjustments in your School?

Questions below ask students to select number 1-5 from Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree).

1. I used the feedback I received to go back over what I had done in my work
2. The feedback I received prompted me to go back over material covered in the course
3. I received hardly any feedback on my work
4. You had to study the entire syllabus to do well in the assessment
5. The assessment system made it possible to be quite selective about what parts of courses you studied
6. The way the assessment worked you had to put the hours in regularly every week
7. It was always easy to know the standard of work expected
8. I paid careful attention to feedback on my work and tried to understand what it was saying
9. The teachers made it clear from the start what they expected from students
10. The staff seemed more interested in testing what I had memorised than what I understood
11. It was possible to be quite strategic about which topics you could afford not to study
12. It was often hard to discover what was expected of me in this course
13. On this course it was necessary to work consistently hard to meet the assessment requirements
14. Too often the staff asked me questions just about facts
15. I didn't understand some of the feedback on my work
16. Whatever feedback I received on my work came too late to be useful
17. The way the assessment worked on this course you had to study every topic
18. To do well on this course all you really needed was a good memory

These questions are about the way you go about your learning on the course

19. When I'm reading I try to memorise important facts which may come in useful later
20. I usually set out to understand thoroughly the meaning of what I am asked to read
21. I generally put a lot of effort into trying to understand things which initially seem difficult
22. I often found myself questioning things that I heard in classes or read in books
23. I find I have to concentrate on memorising a good deal of what we have to learn
24. Often I found I had to study things without having a chance to really understand them

Learning from the exam (only to be completed if there were exams on the course)

25. Doing exams brought things together for me
26. I learnt new things while preparing for the exams
27. I understood things better as a result of the exams

Overall satisfaction

28. Overall I was satisfied with the quality of this degree programme

Free text box questions:

29. Throughout this survey you have been asked to generalise your experience. Please now take the opportunity to tell us about any courses which you felt did not fit with the majority of your expectations.
30. If there was one thing you could change about assessment and feedback on your degree, what would it be?
31. Is there a particularly good approach that your School has to assessment and feedback?

Part 3: Focus Group

(Led by IAD with support from the School)

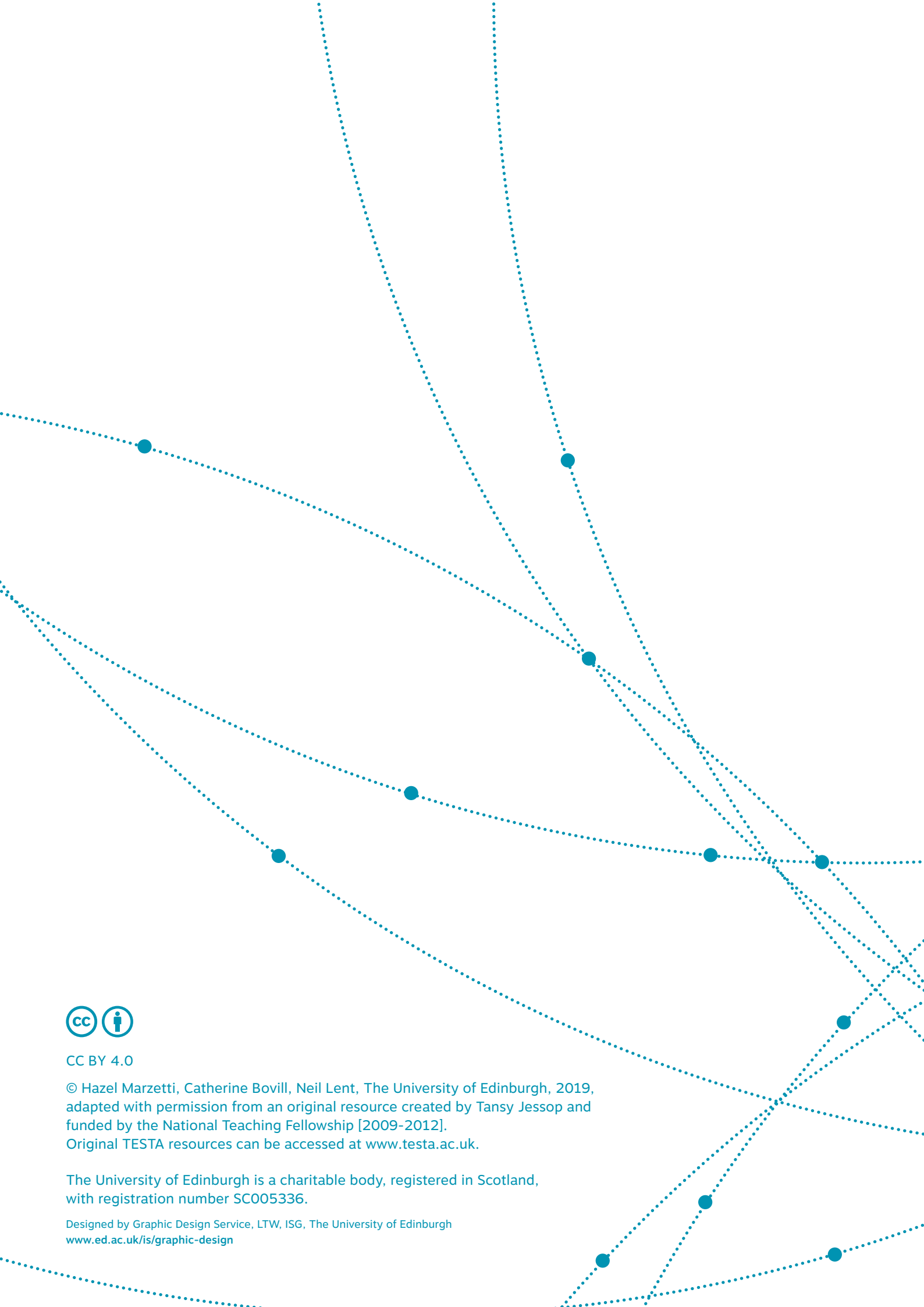
The questions used in this part of the LEAF process are taken from the focus group schedule designed by the TESTA team (**www.testa.ac.uk**). We are happy to add or amend questions in the schedule to meet the needs of the School, to do so please contact: **iad.assessfeedback@ed.ac.uk**. Focus Groups are usually held after, or at least towards the end of the survey period, and we require support from the School to book a room that students will be familiar with and to advertise it to the students.

Below are a sample of the questions that we will use (although we will use appropriate follow-up questions too).

1. What assessments have you done so far on your degree programme?
2. Tell me about how you have come to know what you are supposed to be doing and how you know what is likely to get good marks or to pass or fail?
3. Does the way you're assessed have an impact on how you use your time outside of the classroom?
4. Tell me about the feedback you receive – what do you think of it?
5. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the teaching on your course and how you've found it so far?
6. If there was one single thing that you could change about feedback or assessment on your degree programme, what would it be?

Part 4: Reporting Back

All survey and focus group information will be analysed using a thematic content analysis and will comprise the report alongside Part 1 of the report which has been filled out by the programme contact in the School. This report will then be sent back to the programme contact. Further support can be provided from the IAD for any enhancements that the programme team decide to make in response to the LEAF report, for example offering staff workshops, the facilitation of meetings to discuss LEAF findings, or individual support to implement on-going development of assessment and feedback on your programme's courses.



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Original TESTA resources can be accessed at www.testa.ac.uk.

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