

Executive Summary

1. This paper has been prepared for the PASS-IT Project Board and partners. It reports the internal evaluation of Phase 1 of the PASS-IT project.
2. The evaluation process is intended to inform decision making with regard to Phase 2 of the project and this part of the evaluation was based on data gathered between April and June 2003, using focus group, meetings, questionnaire, and document review methods.
3. The evaluation exercise was tailored to complement the *reflexive*¹ research strategy used by the project research team. In addition, the data for this evaluation was gathered mainly from centre staff and central project personnel. The research team has gathered feedback from school and college students who took part in the pilot assessments.
4. The evidence gathered from centre staff highlighted a wide range of issues which were categorised under four headings:
 - Technical issues affecting the pilot
 - Timing of the pilot
 - Nature of the assessments
 - Organisational issues
5. The focus group discussions with centre staff also highlighted a diversity of views amongst school and college teachers regarding ICT based assessment - ranging from those who were extremely positive and enthusiastic to those who were concerned and sceptical. The focus groups also highlighted the different climate and procedures which characterise school based NQ and college based HN assessment and award programmes.
6. The evidence gathered in this evaluation highlights a number of general issues which should be taken forward for consideration in the planning processes for Phase 2. For example:
 - improving the timing of the pilots to coincide with the initial learning experience of students;
 - finding ways to ensure that students practise prior to the pilot assessments, through better timing, real assessment, or financial/other incentives;
 - developing a standard notation
 - considering general CPD implications in the 'Post-McCrone' context for teachers.

The evaluation evidence also supports the action points arising from the Project Review Workshop held in April 2003, namely:

- Explore ways to ensure students have time and are motivated to practise;
- Address the need for more time to conduct centre-based pilots;
- Review and enhance the question writing process;
- Create more opportunities to learn from 'cross-disciplinarity';
- Focus on quality assurance processes of questions;
- Work to develop consistent notation;
- Work to develop communications at all levels of the project.

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¹ '*Reflexive*' - as in regularly referring back to consider the impact and consequences of research activities on the research/project aims.