

# Decolonising our Assessments

## What do I need to consider?

We need to decolonise assessments because some assessment methods may be based on Western knowledge systems and biases, potentially disadvantaging students from diverse backgrounds and perpetuating systemic inequalities. There is very little point in decolonising what we teach and the way we teach it if we then use assessments which do not align with our decolonised approach.

## How could I introduce this into my teaching?

* The following questions may help:
* Does this assessment **recognise and value diverse forms of knowledge and experiences**?
* Does the course teaching **enable all students to understand what is expected of them and how to approach this assessment**?
* Is there an option to **recognise students’ own experience / knowledge in the assessment**?
* Does the assessment **contain content that is outside of traditional colonial sources**?
* Do the resources provided to support the completion of the assessment **celebrate / promote colonial agents as the only dynamic figures in a narrative**?
* Does the group that created this knowledge **comprise only a very narrow section of the affected populations**?
* Does this assessment **measure what it is intended to measure**?
* Does the assessment **contain language or terminology that may be unfamiliar to those from non-colonial backgrounds**? E.g. terms such as *slave* and *master* which could be replaced with *enslaved* and *enslaver*. For additional examples and discussion on language see https://languageplease.org/topics/race-and-ethnicity/
* Are the examples or contextualisation of the questions **promoting negative stereotypes or colonial viewpoints of society**?
* Consider what you might do differently:
* **Evaluation of the assessment** - you could consider adding some questions to the course evaluation such as:
  + Were the questions designed in a way that avoided cultural bias or assumptions about a students' background knowledge or cultural experience?
  + Did the assessment acknowledge the historical and cultural contributions of [discipline] from diverse backgrounds?
  + Were any non-Western [discipline] concepts or practices included in the assessment?
* **Involve others** –has the assessment been developed and /or reviewed by a diverse group of individuals representative of relevant stakeholders including those with non-colonial perspectives?
* **Involve students in the assessment process** - through giving them a voice and choice in how they are assessed. This can include co-constructing assessment criteria with learners, allowing learners to self-assess and peer-assess, and involving learners in the evaluation and feedback process.

## Where can I find additional information and resources?

* [The UoA Decolonising the Curriculum website](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/about/strategy-and-governance/assessment-and-feedback-2635.php)