



CAMBRIDGE



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**
Faculty of Education

Postgraduate Advanced Certificate in Educational Studies: Educational Assessment



Summary of Units

PGCA 2025/26 – Summary of Unit Content

Note: the information provided below is provisional. Content covered in the units is subject to change as part of standard review procedures.

Unit 1 – Principles of Assessment

Below is a summary of the content topics covered in the 10 teaching weeks of Unit 1. The research methods weeks are two teaching weeks that are incorporated into the ten teaching weeks of the unit.

Week 0	Introductions
Week 1	Purposes of assessment
Week 2	Validity 1
Week 3	Validity 2
Week 4	Threats to validity, debates and issues
Week 5	Reliability 1 (consistency and accuracy)
Week 6	Reliability 2 (measuring reliability)
Week 7	Standards
Week 8	Validation
Weeks 9 and 10	Research methods, study skills and reading time

Optional Units 2A and 2B

For Unit 2, students have a choice of two optional units:

- 2A: Assessment Design and Evaluation
- 2B: Assessment for Learning

Prospective students are asked to make a provisional choice for their preferred unit on the application form. Once students are enrolled onto the course, they will be asked to confirm their choice approximately halfway through Unit 1 in November.

The module content is provided below. In addition to these topics, there are four study weeks which focus on research methods. The research methods elements of the course are the same for each unit.

The assignment is also the same for both unit choices – a research enquiry on a topic of professional interest.

Unit 2A – Assessment design and evaluation

- Designing assessments: question papers, tasks and mark schemes, as well as designing performance assessments
- Principled assessment design and threats to validity
- Analysing and quality assuring assessments
- Approaches to marking and reliability of marking, including for performance assessments
- Comparative judgement and adaptive comparative judgement
- Validating and evaluating questions, tasks and mark schemes

Unit 2B - Assessment for learning

- Definitions and principles of assessment for learning
- Theories of learning
- Implementing AfL: learning culture
- Implementing AfL: questioning and dialogic teaching
- Implementing AfL: feedback
- Peer-assessment and self-assessment
- Challenges and strategies for implementing AfL

Unit 3 – Futures of assessment

Unit 3 is a 10-week unit.

For Unit 3 there are five topic areas which are framed around a series of ‘big questions’ important to the future of assessment. Students study each of these topics over one or two teaching weeks supported by an online tutor.

The ‘big questions’ are updated regularly to reflect the latest trends and developments in educational assessment. Example big questions are provided below for context:

- What is the role of AI in improving or challenging current assessment validity?
- How can test designers make assessment as fair as possible?
- What are the current challenges to unlocking the potential of technology in assessment and how can they be overcome?
- In times of educational reform, how can assessment foster trust within an education system?