

## Video transcript

(<https://youtu.be/HOpzRZraJMw>)

Kelly: Peter thanks for having a conversation with us today.

I'm going to get right into it.

Identity verified assessment.

Tell us what that is.

Peter: So there's a whole lot of challenges with setting good assessment.

And one of the increasing problems we're finding is that in many cases we don't actually know whether the student whose name is on the top of the assessment did the assessment themselves or whether they perhaps got someone else to do it.

And so identity verified assessment often with hurdles is an attempt to try and give us with high confidence the belief that the assessment item with that student's name on it was done by that student.

Kelly: Yes.

So what I hear you saying is that there is one area around assessment design.

We've been talking about authentic assessment density verified assessment is really thinking about making sure that the student who is turning in the assessment has actually done that work.

Peter: That's exactly right.

Of course assessment has to do many many things has to assess the learning objectives it has to be credible it has to be authentic and has to be fair.

It has to be doable in the time for the student it has to be able to be assessed by the staff member in time and to give good feedback to the student.

But something that I think we often forget is what I think is one of the most basic things of all and that is to have high confidence that the student did the assessment themselves if they got someone else to do it that doesn't really matter if you're assessing the learning objectives or or anything else because you're going to graduate a student from your course who perhaps can't do anything at all.

So so as well as all those other things I think we need to make a bigger effort to keep saying with high confidence believes the student did the work.

Of course you can never be absolutely certain.

Even in an exam or in a performance someone else can have done a whole lot of the work or even be impersonating a student.

But all we want to do is have high confidence that the student did that work themselves.

And so the idea with identity verified assess with a hurdle is in most or all courses.

The university is now intending to require those courses to include at least one item of assessment which is identity verified and that needs to be a high stakes item.

By that I mean it can't just be 10 percent and it can't not matter if the student doesn't do well on it.

So the university is proposing guidelines of the form that this assessment item has to be highest valued maybe 30 40 percent or more and the student has to perform at at least a certain level on that assessment item in order to receive a passing grade.

Now that's controversial a little bit because if I say that this assessment item is worth 40 percent but 60 percent doesn't have to be identity verified.

Some people say to me Well that means that the student can get through by doing a whole lot of if you like cheating all of the 60 percent.

That's why we need to make this item high stakes in the students has the past.

Kelly: And I think it's controversial for another reason.

I think it's controversial for many reasons.

And when I think about assessment I think about it as relating to learning and being relationship that I've got with students in my class and in the tutorial now my classes are smaller class size.

So to me this feels like you're taking away my academic kind of expertise to make my own decisions about assessment in my classes that are very relational where again a smaller class size.

So what does this mean for academics like me where it feels like now you're trying to standardize or tell me what to do that's taking away some of my freedom and choice around the assessment that I think is working really well for myself and my students are acutely aware of the University Central too much telling our academic colleagues what they have to do when I genuinely believe that academic activity is driven from the bottom up by by excellent people doing their teaching and their research the way I counter that is is I say.

That we know that there's a problem.

Peter: With students not doing the work themselves.

We can't tell how large that problem is but it's an institutional issue.

And so we need all of our teaching colleagues to take responsibility for increasing the likelihood that cheating is difficult.

And so I think at times like that it's appropriate for for us to say to all of our teaching colleagues you have to do this now.

We're trying to give a lot of flexibility in the way that people do that.

So some people say to me Well I did it he verified assessment or exams.

And my response to that is we'll know that not because it can be prac work lab work fieldwork medical rotations musical performance presentations I we're just going to ask like this that it sounds to me like when I just think about it you want me to do an individual rated exam which I don't do in my course.

Kelly: But you're not saying it has to be a ventilated exam there's lots of ways that you can identity verified the assessment.

Peter: In essence I think I'm saying it has to be individualized which in some sense fieldwork or lab work is but it doesn't have to be an exam.

No I'm not a fool I know that in large classes it's probably going to be an exam.

Right.

I also know that exams aren't perfect forms of assessment.

They're high stakes that high stress that they're not authentic.

But I've thought a lot about this in some cases if we don't do this identity verified assessment we know we're graduating students who've demonstrated nothing.

So all of the talk about authentic assessment and and not wanting to privilege one type of assessment over another I think is trumped by the fact that we are graduating students who haven't done that assessment at all.

Now we're not mandating 100 percent identity verified assessment in all courses.

If I did that then that would take away the opportunity for more authentic assessment in courses.

I think zero percent identity verified is too low.

I think 100 percent is too high.

In my view this requiring 30 to 40 percent is actually a nice balance between the the authenticity the ritual forms of assessment and what will happen I know in a number of courses which is ending up with exams although I repeat doesn't have to be exact.

Kelly: Yes it's good to know it's it.

You had to take the context of your class size into account along with the discipline and police felt what learning and what needs to be demonstrated in these different context and disciplines.

Looks like I wonder what what message are we sending to students and staff.

Peter: Are we creating an atmosphere of we don't trust you we don't trust students to be doing the assessment and if a sense of academic integrity and we don't trust academics to be making the right decisions that are engendering a sense of academic integrity in every course we want to be reasonably sure that the student themselves did 30 to 40 percent of the assessment we wonder if I went out to people in the main street of Brisbane and said That's what I'm asking for.

I think they'd look at me and say why aren't you certain that they've done 100 percent of the assessment.

Yes I think people would be shocked that that we're asking in fact for what I think is relatively little.

So it's not a matter of trusting or not.

It's a matter I think of doing even less than most people would expect that we would do that.

But at least doing something more than we are now.

Kelly: So where is that policy right now.

Peter has this been.

Is this is this officially a policy within the university is it out for consultation.

Do academics need to be thinking right now in the moment.

Is my course within compliance with the policy.

Peter: So we talked to the Vice Chancellors Committee late last year a suite of eleven or twelve parts to a proposal how better to manage academic integrity within the university.

And this included things like helping staff develop better assessment if you like and maybe a on a code for students or that one's a bit controversial in Australia that's seen as an American thing better educating students on the university's expectations and so on.

And one of those 11 to 12 things was identity verified a system with hurdles.

Now Vice Chancellors Committee didn't accept all the recommendations.

For example the honor code I think that they did accept the identity verified assessment with hurdles.

So it's not currently a policy but the proposal is to introduce it in semester to 2020 across all the faculties.

Now I will say that that were wise enough to recognize it in some courses.

This just doesn't work.

For example if it's a course in software engineering that's about group programming then maybe it's not necessary to assess individual performance because because it's the group performance that matters.

I think they do assess individual performance but nonetheless we understand there are courses where where this isn't appropriate or isn't possible and we're not going to force it in places where it doesn't work.

But for most courses I hope and believe that it will become required in semester to 2020.

Kelly: Yes.

And of course I think everyone can agree with.

We want to feel confident that the students are giving grades to are the students who have demonstrated that that level of learning.

So will this become then by Semester 2 will be officially in the PPO.

Peter: People can go and read more about it online.

I believe that's the case but as I said it's still working through that process.

Kelly: Great.

Thank you Peter for taking the time to talk to us about identity verified assessment and hurdles.