

13. What should be taken into account when costing for assessment?

Assessment obviously has a cost, whether this is borne by the public system, by private providers or the private sector. Planning for any form of assessment has to include costing. In some sectors such as schooling the costs of internal assessment may be subsumed into the time of the professional staff, and into costs relating to materials, while that of external assessment is either borne by the state or linked to student fees. For private providers, however, there may be visible costs, such as paying for the design, setting and marking of assessments, resources or materials used, assessment personnel or agencies, and for recording and reporting procedures. There are also hidden costs across the board, in relation to time taken by both learners and assessors, as well as various administrative procedures.

But the cost of good assessment, whether internal or external, can usually be justified if the assessment is used for as many purposes as possible in terms of individual learners, educators and for institutional development. The return on investment can be seen over time if the rich feedback loops provided by good assessment are fully utilised.

[Answer to FAQ 13, The NQF and Assessment, the NQF Gateway]