# e-Assessment Association Chairs Report

# AGM 2021

23/09/2021

Having been in post for only been in post since April 2021, my report will be a little shorter than previous Chairs.

During the last 6 months I have been heavily involved in the delivery of the virtual conference and awards events, connecting with members to understand their challenges, and using my marketing skills to define a calendar/annual plan for the association. In addition to these tasks, I have been working with members of the board to define the CEO role and build stronger bonds with connected associations.

COVID put educational technology in the headlines. Organizations all around the world have undertaken rapid implementations of e-assessment or associated technologies. To understand how we can help members of our community during the next cycle of e-assessment interest, it has been important to get to know them better. This includes understanding their pains, challenges, and needs in relation to e-assessment. I have therefore been asking members on a one-to-one basis: “Currently, what is your biggest challenge in relation to technology and assessment?” The e-Assessment Associations community is broad, from practitioners to theorists, from users to coders. Therefore, as you would imagine, you are never going to get one clear answer. The intention is to build up a picture of the things that matter most to the community so that the board can quickly establish a priority list for the coming year.

Based on the responses to date, I believe that the organization needs to organize itself around the following key areas:

* Gathering evidence relating to the value of e-Assessment
* Providing practical guidance on the implementation of e-Assessment
* Communicating the results of e-Assessment implementation
* Celebrating the achievements of members
* Connecting and facilitating the interaction between all members of the association
* Growing the association, making it an internationally recognized thought leader
* Ensuring the work of the association is sustainable

It is my proposal, that over the coming year, we prioritize the activities of the association, with one or more tactics being undertaken, and properly resourced, under each of the above key areas.

Alongside this, I have been working with the board to establish a calendar of events for the association. This calendar will form a plan by which we can assign owners and resource. By having a regular cycle, the association can begin to form a pattern of communication. Members and sponsors will then be aware of our cycle of activities, improving attendance and engagement. When we took on the delivery of the e-Assessment Question Conference and Exhibition, it started us down this path. As you will all be aware, we had to pivot our delivery of that event due to the pandemic, and this has had a lasting impact on how we, and our friends, deliver events. Therefore, from all that we have learnt from COVID, now is the time to formalize a new calendar.

Being connected to other industry associations is essential. We all have other community commitments to our names, it’s what makes us part of the community. This year I have been Vice-Chair to the European Association of Test Publishers Conference. Next year I will become the Chair of the conference. Through this role I promote the work of the e-Assessment Association as well as working to find common ground and opportunities to work together. I’m pleased to say that interviews with the winners of the e-Assessment Awards will feature at the 2021 Conference.

Finally, one key change in my working life has been leaving BTL to take a short career break and spend time with my family. In the past I’m aware that members of the association have been concerned about my independence, given I was working for BTL. The problem with this is that we all work for someone, I don’t know anyone on the board who is truly independent of an organization with some form of commercial interest. I intend to become a consultant, working with multiple commercial organizations within our space. I hope that this will settle the concerns of members, as well as strengthen my offer, given that I will be exposed to multiple viewpoints from across the industry. I think it’s important for members to understand that the board does consider the independence of the Chair. I know I have taken the matter seriously, as have the Chairs in the past. As I’m up for election back on the board this year, it will be for the members to decide if I’m to be back on the board, and for the board to decide if they wish me to be the chair.

The last 18months have had a huge impact on us all. I hope that you all have personally made it through COVID without loss or heartache, but I’m realistic to know that given the size of the association membership, it will have been impossible for all members to have escaped the pain of COVID. Please keep supporting each other as best you can.

All the best,

Tim Burnett, Chair of the e-Assessment Association.