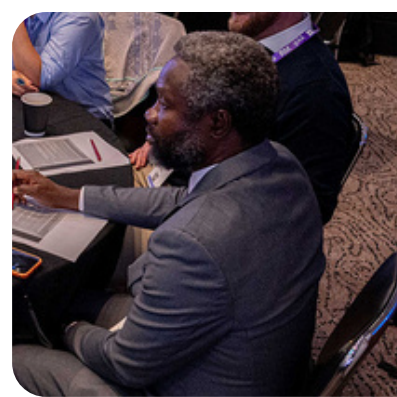
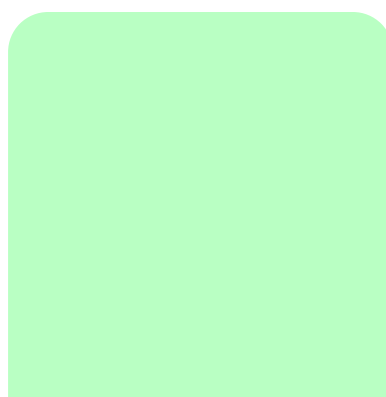
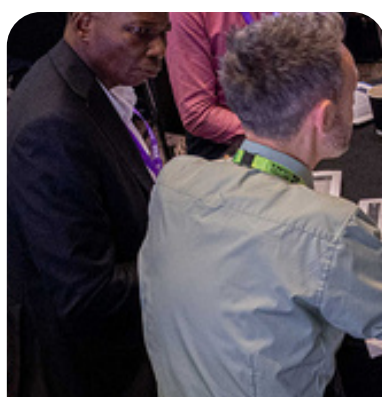
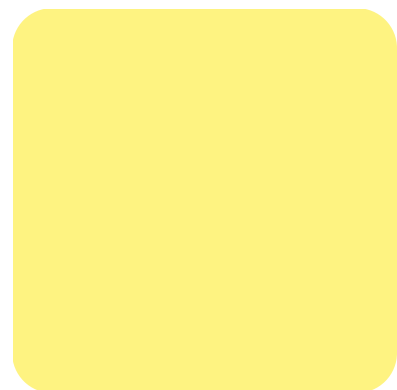
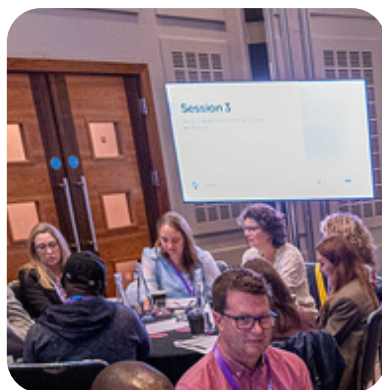
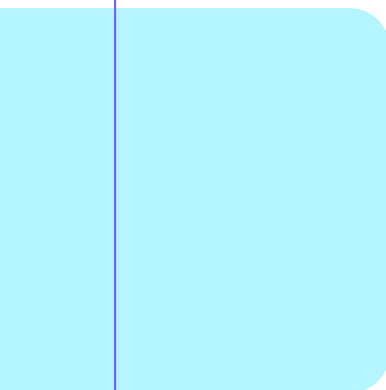
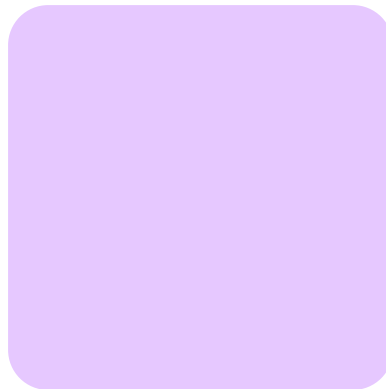


NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
ROUNDTABLE REPORT 2026

Building Trust in National Digital Assessment



Introduction

The National Examinations Roundtable provides a unique opportunity for senior leaders responsible for national assessment to come together, share experiences and discuss the opportunities and challenges shaping the future of assessment.

Now in its third year, the Roundtable has become an important international forum, bringing together ministries of education, regulators, national examination bodies, awarding organisations and technology providers from around the world. While education systems differ significantly in their priorities, structures and levels of digital maturity, the discussions consistently demonstrate that many of the strategic challenges are shared.

The conversations in 2026 reflected how quickly the assessment landscape continues to evolve. Previous Roundtables focused largely on the transition to digital assessment and the practical considerations associated with implementation. This year, while those issues remain important, discussions increasingly explored broader questions about trust, assessment design, integrity, workforce readiness and the growing influence of AI across education.

This report captures the themes and emerging issues that arose repeatedly throughout the discussions. It reflects the collective experience of participants and highlights areas where continued collaboration, research and knowledge sharing will be essential.

One of the greatest strengths of the National Examinations Roundtable is the openness with which participants share both their successes and their challenges. By learning from one another, the international assessment community is better equipped to build assessment systems that are trusted, resilient and fit for the future. We hope the insights contained within this report stimulate further discussion and support the continued development of digital assessment around the world.

Graham Hudson
Chair, e-Assessment Association



Executive Summary

Building on discussions held in 2024 and 2025, this year's Roundtable reflected a notable shift in focus. While the practical implementation of digital assessment remains an important priority, delegates increasingly explored how assessment systems can continue to deliver trusted, fair and relevant qualifications in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

Artificial intelligence featured throughout the discussions, not as a standalone topic but because it is increasingly influencing assessment design, curriculum, examination integrity, workforce skills and public confidence. Rather than asking whether AI should be adopted, participants considered how assessment should evolve as AI becomes embedded in learning and the workplace.

Despite representing countries with very different education systems, regulatory frameworks and stages of digital maturity, delegates identified remarkably consistent priorities and challenges across five discussion themes.

1. Building confidence in the future of national assessment

Trust underpinned every discussion. Delegates agreed that technological innovation must be accompanied by transparency, governance, human oversight and clear evidence that confidence in assessment is maintained.

2. Maintaining integrity in increasingly complex assessment environments

Protecting assessment integrity is becoming more challenging as technology evolves. Participants highlighted the importance of proactive risk management, operational resilience and collaboration between assessment organisations, governments, regulators and technology providers.

3. Rethinking assessment design

Assessment design will continue to evolve as AI becomes increasingly integrated into learning and the workplace. Discussions explored how assessment can continue to measure the knowledge, skills and behaviours that remain uniquely valuable whilst making appropriate use of emerging technologies.

4. Skills, curriculum and the future workforce

Delegates recognised that AI is changing employer expectations and influencing curriculum design. Qualifications will need to continue evolving to prepare learners for future employment while maintaining confidence in standards.

5. Leadership, policy and international collaboration

Successful digital transformation depends upon clear leadership, sustained policy direction and collaboration across the assessment community. Participants repeatedly highlighted the value of sharing international experience and learning from one another.

Key Findings from the Roundtable Discussions



01 Building confidence in the future of national assessment

Trust underpinned every discussion. Delegates agreed that confidence in national assessment takes years to build but can quickly be undermined if assessment systems fail to keep pace with changes in education, technology and society.

Participants observed that technology providers are often able to introduce new AI-enabled functionality more quickly than customers, regulators or policymakers are prepared to adopt it. Building confidence through transparency, strong governance, appropriate human oversight and clear evidence of fairness is therefore as important as developing new technologies.

Maintaining the trust of learners, educators, employers, policymakers and the wider public will remain fundamental to the future of national assessment.

Discussion Insight

Innovation alone will not determine the future of assessment. Public confidence, governance and trust must evolve alongside technology.

02 Maintaining integrity in an increasingly complex assessment environment

Protecting the integrity of national examinations is becoming increasingly complex as assessment systems become more digital. Malpractice continues to evolve, with attempts to exploit both technology and operational processes becoming increasingly sophisticated.

Operational resilience was considered equally important. Participants described approaches to managing infrastructure failures, power outages and local disruption through contingency planning, automated candidate rescheduling and multiple communication channels.

Delegates agreed that, rather than responding to incidents as they occur, assessment organisations should continually identify vulnerabilities, monitor emerging threats and strengthen systems before weaknesses are exploited. This requires close collaboration between examination organisations, regulators, governments and technology providers, recognising that protecting assessment integrity is a shared responsibility.

Discussion Insight

Integrity is no longer simply about responding to incidents. Increasingly, it depends on anticipating risks, strengthening resilience and preparing for disruption before it occurs.

International Reflection

Delegates shared examples of increasingly sophisticated attempts to compromise national examinations, reinforcing the need for organisations to understand the complete technical environment in which assessments are delivered. Practical examples also highlighted the importance of contingency planning, automated candidate rescheduling and multiple communication channels in maintaining confidence when disruption occurs.



03 Rethinking assessment design

One of the most significant discussions centred on how assessment itself may need to evolve, particularly as AI becomes increasingly embedded in learning and the workplace.

Delegates reflected on the implications for curriculum design and learning, questioning how AI may influence learning and whether existing assessment models remain appropriate.

Several participants argued that assessment should focus less on preventing candidates from using AI and more on understanding how it is used appropriately, with assessment increasingly used to demonstrate judgement, critical thinking and understanding.

Participants also recognised opportunities for AI to support assessment processes, such as item development and administration, provided robust quality assurance and human oversight remain central.

Discussion Insight

The discussion is shifting from asking whether candidates use AI to considering what assessment should measure in an AI-enabled world.

International Reflection

Several organisations described increasing interest in more authentic forms of assessment, including professional conversations, viva-style assessments and other approaches that allow candidates to demonstrate understanding, judgement and ownership of their work. While approaches differ between sectors, delegates recognised growing interest in assessment methods that complement traditional examinations.



04 Skills, curriculum and the future workforce

Delegates recognised that AI is influencing not only assessment but also the skills required by employers and the expectations placed upon education systems. Qualifications must continue to evolve to prepare learners for future employment while maintaining public confidence.

Discussions highlighted the growing importance of transferable skills, adaptability, collaboration and AI literacy, alongside the challenge of responding to changing workforce needs without compromising the integrity of qualifications.

Participants also recognised the need for stronger alignment between curriculum, assessment and workforce policy, requiring closer collaboration between governments, regulators, employers and awarding organisations.



International Reflection

There is a growing recognition that qualifications must continue to evolve alongside changing workforce needs. Delegates reflected on the importance of transferable skills, AI literacy and stronger alignment between curriculum, assessment and workforce policy while maintaining public confidence.

Discussion Insight

Assessment, curriculum and workforce policy cannot evolve independently if qualifications are to remain relevant.

05 Leadership, policy and international collaboration

Delegates agreed that the future of national assessment will depend as much on leadership and collaboration as on technology. Successful digital transformation requires clear national policy, sustained political commitment and long-term investment.

Assessment literacy also emerged as an important consideration. Participants recognised that many concerns surrounding AI and digital assessment stem from limited understanding of assessment principles rather than the technology itself.

Perhaps the most encouraging outcome of the Roundtable was the recognition that countries are facing many of the same challenges. Sharing experiences, practical examples and lessons learned was seen as essential to supporting innovation, building confidence and accelerating progress across the international assessment community.

Discussion Insight

Countries may be taking different routes, but many are working to address remarkably similar challenges.

“

One of the greatest strengths of the Roundtable is the willingness of participants to share both their successes and their challenges. Those conversations help build confidence that progress is possible, whatever stage of the journey a country is on.

Graham Hudson, Session Chair

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Overall Reflections

The third National Examinations Roundtable demonstrated how the conversation around national examinations continues to evolve.

While previous discussions focused primarily on the transition to digital assessment and the practical challenges of implementation, this year's discussions increasingly explored how national assessment systems can remain trusted, relevant and resilient in a rapidly changing educational landscape.



The discussion themes provided a framework for the day, but the conversations consistently demonstrated how closely these issues are connected. Discussions about assessment design quickly extended into curriculum, workforce needs and public confidence. Conversations about AI became discussions about governance, regulation and trust. Across every session, delegates recognised that decisions about national assessment cannot be considered in isolation but must reflect wider changes across education, technology and society.

Despite representing countries with different education systems, regulatory frameworks and stages of digital maturity, participants repeatedly identified common challenges. While national contexts differ, there was broad agreement that maintaining public confidence, protecting the integrity of assessment and ensuring qualifications remain relevant will require continued collaboration between governments, regulators, assessment organisations and technology providers.

Perhaps the greatest value of the Roundtable was the opportunity to learn from one another. Participants openly shared practical experience, operational challenges and emerging approaches, recognising that while solutions will differ between countries, many of the underlying questions are shared. This willingness to exchange experience remains one of the defining strengths of the National Examinations Roundtable and demonstrates the importance of continued international collaboration as national assessment continues to evolve.



The biggest reassurance was realising we are not alone.

Roundtable participant



Looking Ahead

National examinations have always evolved in response to changes in education, society and the needs of employers. The discussions at the 2026 National Examinations Roundtable demonstrated that this evolution is continuing, with digital transformation, changing workforce expectations and emerging technologies prompting organisations to review long-established approaches to assessment.

Many of the questions explored during the Roundtable remain unresolved, and rightly so. There is no single model for successful national assessment, nor is there a universal pace of change. Each country will continue to respond according to its own educational priorities, regulatory framework and national context. However, the discussions reinforced the value of sharing evidence, practical experience and lessons learned, enabling organisations to benefit from collective knowledge while maintaining confidence in their own systems.

The e-Assessment Association continues to support this international dialogue by bringing together national examination organisations, regulators, policymakers and technology providers to share experience, explore emerging issues and promote informed discussion about the future of national assessment.

The future of national examinations will not be defined by technology alone, but by the collective commitment to ensuring assessment remains trusted, fair and relevant for every learner.



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