

FEEDBACK POLICY

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1. Introduction

Feedback is an integral part of teaching and learning and is crucial in developing students as independent learners. This document clarifies what feedback is, the principles that underpin good practice and the standards and responsibilities expected of academic staff, faculties and students at the University of Stirling.

2. What is the purpose of feedback?

Feedback should prompt and assist a student to pro-actively reflect on their learning and goals, so that they can:

- become independent learners;
- understand what 'good' performance is and how this might be achieved;
- monitor progress and identify recurring issues; and
- be motivated and develop their self-esteem.

3. What is feedback?

Feedback:

- identifies strengths and weaknesses;
- explains why or how marks have been awarded;
- may debate different ideas, to suggest alternatives;
- may provide an opportunity to edit and clarify;
- celebrates high attainment and success; and
- will suggest how to improve next time.

Feedback can be both informal and formal, and can be provided individually and in groups. It can be offered by anyone including a student them self, academic staff, other students and mentors. Feedback can take many different forms. Some examples might be:

- **Participating in and reflecting on:**
 - discussions in class about assignments or presentations;
 - a practice marking session or commenting on a sample assignment;
 - 'drop-in' advice at feedback & guidance sessions;
 - discussions in supervision meetings;
 - 'clicker' responses in a lecture;
 - a debriefing by a professional practitioner or mentor.
- **Reviewing and reflecting on:**
 - electronic, written or audio feedback through Canvas;
 - verbal or written comments from staff or other students;

- assignment exemplars;
- practice assignments or past exam papers;
- plagiarism similarity reports;
- entries in learning journals on academic/professional experiences;
- ratings on a marking rubric;
- 'generic' feedback to a class on how an exam question was tackled;
- final marks or awards;
- reactions to a presentation;
- comparative performance against peers.

4. The Principles of Effective Feedback

Effective feedback should be:

- *Constructive and supportive*: respectful and note strengths as well as areas for development;
- *Clear and accessible*: easy to understand and offered in an accessible format;
- *Embedded*: providing opportunities to give, receive and engage with feedback within the curriculum and planned across programmes;
- *Timely*: regularly offered throughout modules and at the right time for students to reflect on and integrate learning into future work;
- *Transparent*: directly related to the learning outcomes/assessment criteria against which the overall mark is awarded, if related to a specific piece of work;
- *Goal referenced*: aligned to the assessment criteria and clear about the extent to which goals have been met. It should identify steps to be taken towards future improvement; and
- *A dialogue*: prompting discussions and reflection around learning and performance.

5. Standards and Responsibilities

Academic staff

Academic staff will:

- adopt the Principles of Effective Feedback, outlined above;
- provide information on feedback in module information on:
 - what kinds of feedback students can expect;
 - when feedback will be delivered;
 - how feedback will be communicated;
 - how students are expected to engage with feedback and what the student responsibilities are;
 - details of assessment guidelines, expected standards (e.g. by use of exemplars) and assessment criteria;
 - feedback and guidance sessions; and
 - this policy;
- offer, as a minimum, electronic feedback within 3 weeks, on assignments (written, oral or other) which count towards a final module mark (except dissertations or the equivalent). If, due to exceptional circumstances this is not possible, this should be communicated to students with an explanation and a new return date indicate;
- offer, as a minimum, general feedback on the overall performance of the cohort on examinations;
- encourage further dialogue with students as part of the feedback process, through other appropriate methods such as feedback and guidance sessions;
- review their own approach to feedback through activities such as moderation processes, sharing good practice and participating in CPD opportunities.

Students

Students have a significant responsibility for proactively engaging with the feedback process to maximise their learning.

Students will:

- familiarise themselves with module information on how to approach assessments and how, when and where to find their feedback;
- access and digest their feedback;
- seek further help and guidance from academic staff and other students
- ensure they have a record of feedback for future use;
- reflect on feedback to celebrate and build on strengths;
- use what they have learnt in their approach to work in the future; and
- offer constructive and supportive feedback to other students when asked to do so.

Faculties

Faculties will:

- implement processes to regularly monitor and maintain the provision, method of delivery, timeliness and quality of feedback practices;
- review the effectiveness of feedback practices and the students' experience of feedback across programmes; and
- ensure that academic staff workloads reflect the time associated with providing feedback and are sustainable.

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A Student Guide to Feedback

What is feedback?

It is a key part of developing as an independent learner. It guides you to identify your strengths and how to improve your future work. It comes in many forms (e.g. electronically, written, audio recording, verbal, class feedback/personal feedback and with exemplars) and from different people, including your tutors and other students.

Who is responsible for feedback?

The University is responsible for ensuring you receive feedback that is:

- clear and accessible
- returned electronically (unless otherwise advised in advance)
- received within 3 weeks of submitting work, except for dissertations or equivalent*
- constructive and supportive
- aligned to the final mark awarded and to the assessment learning outcomes and
- identifies the strengths of the work, as well as areas for improvement
- appropriate for the level of study.

You are responsible for:

- familiarising yourself with module information on how to approach assessments and how, when and where to find your feedback
- accessing and digesting your feedback
- seeking further help and guidance from your tutors and other students
- saving a copy of your feedback for future use
- reflecting on your feedback to celebrate and build on your strengths and to use what you have learnt in your approach to work in the future
- offering constructive and supportive feedback to other students when asked to do so.

Further help is always available

Feedback and Guidance sessions are available regularly for every module, and provide opportunities for you to clarify and discuss your feedback 1-to-1. Check module information for details. Student Learning Services can also help you, check details at <http://www.stir.ac.uk/campus-life/learning-support/student-learning-services/>. If in doubt, your personal tutor can guide you to sources of help.

* if not possible, in exceptional circumstances, students will be given an explanation for the delay and a new date set