

COLLEGE POLICY: STUDENT FEEDBACK ON ASSESSMENT

Policy Category:	Academic
Subject:	Assessment Feedback
Approving Authority:	College Education Committee & Academic Board
Responsible Officer:	Vice-Principal (Education) and the Executive Director, Students & Education
Delegated Authority:	Academic Standards Sub Committee
Effective Date:	1 September 2021
Supersedes:	Policy for Students on Feedback (approved 22 April 2017) and Policy for Staff on Student Feedback (approved 22 April 2017)
Next review:	2021/22

A. PURPOSE & SCOPE

1. The College's feedback provision aims to support the ambitions of the Education Strategy, specifically, Principle 2 of the Assessment and Feedback principles:

Principle 2: Feedback will be an integral part of all learning. It will be clearly articulated, support forward learning and will employ a variety of approaches. All feedback will be constructive and contextualised, and will be provided in a timely manner, with digital techniques used where possible to allow for instant feedback which will inform a student's next activity. Feedback, both specific and generic, will be provided in multiple ways, including peer feedback using the student as an educator, but must always be aligned with the relevant marking criteria. Guidance will be issued to students to enable them to gain an understanding of what feedback is, when it is being given, and how it should be used to help build the foundations for learning and improve their assessment literacy.

2. This policy applies to all students, and professional services and academic staff members involved with the delivery of assessment and feedback.

B. POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Feedback is at the core of learning and teaching in the College. In its simplest form feedback is a conversation between student and educator, and students are encouraged to engage with feedback throughout their programme. The feedback students obtain will come in many different forms, both formal and informal, including assessment grades, comments on work, conversations with tutors, notes to an entire class, and discussion with other students. Feedback on summative written work (such as exam papers or coursework assignments) is the most common type of formal feedback students can expect to receive. However, it is equally applicable to other assessed activities such as when students are on a placement, in a laboratory, on a field trip, a ward or giving a presentation or performance.

1.2 Feedback occurs consistently throughout programmes of study in both formal and informal settings. This policy addresses only feedback provided in relation to assessments.

2. EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

2.1 Whatever form feedback takes, it is a valuable tool to support a student's learning development for their next relevant piece of work/activity. Feedback aims to be insightful, critical, and enabling: an exercise in learning rather than a quantitative measure of how a student has done in their last piece of work.

2.2 Effective feedback is:

2.2.1 Constructive - recognising strengths as well as weaknesses

- Feedback often concentrates on correcting errors, but it should also encourage students to understand what they have done right. Apart from the obvious benefits to students' morale and motivation, this helps them gain a full appreciation of why they did well, and what constitutes good work.

2.2.2 Forward looking

- It is recommended that a formative opportunity should precede a summative item of assessment, particularly in years one and two of undergraduate programmes. This provides a 'feed-forward' opportunity for students to understand what is expected of them on subsequent summative assignments.

2.2.3 Timely

- To be effective, feedback must be delivered promptly, while students still have a clear recollection of the assignment just tackled, and so that it can feed forward into the next assignment.

2.2.4 Comprehensible

- A student needs to understand feedback; it should be clear and unambiguous. In certain contexts, a glossary to explain any technical terminology may help a student's understanding.

2.2.5 Relevant/Specific

- Feedback should be related to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the task so that students are aware of what is expected of them.

2.2.6 Encouraging

- A student needs to know from the feedback they receive what they must do in future to improve the work that contributes to their degree.

3. FEEDBACK DELIVERY

3.1 The importance of delivering timely and effective feedback means that a range of methods, appropriate to the different forms of assessment, are required. Traditionally, feedback is often associated with a one-on-one scenario with individual written comments, but there are other, equally effective (and often less time-consuming), methods of providing feedback:

- Generic/group feedback - useful for going over assignments and exam questions, highlighting the areas that were generally good and those that were not.
- Model answers/exemplars - particularly useful for examination feedback.
- Feedback sheets with marking criteria explained - useful for explaining what is required to achieve particular grades.
- Handout sheets - useful for summarising the areas covered in generic feedback.
- Self-assessment - useful for improving a student's use of self-reflection, specifically their evaluative judgement and their development of effective learning strategies.
- Peer assessment – useful for encouraging students to learn from each other and to use the discourse of the subject to promote a more independent approach to learning and deepen their understanding of the assessment criteria.
- Chair-side or bench-side feedback - particularly useful for clinical or practical situations as the feedback can be delivered almost immediately.
- Other options such as electronic and audio methods are effective too and can improve the timeliness of the feedback.

4. KEY FEEDBACK PRINCIPLES FOR FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS

4.1 The College expects all Faculties and Departments to:

- Deliver written feedback promptly, while students still have a clear recollection of the assessment just completed.
- Ensure all students have a clear understanding of when they will receive their feedback:
 - for coursework, this normally will be no longer than four weeks from the submission deadline (excluding College closure days and public holidays). Some forms of assessment such as dissertations, a taped case study, audio visual submissions, final laboratory reports, summative coursework submitted at the end of the module etc may require longer, and this must be made explicitly clear to students;
 - for written examinations, faculties must provide students with details of how and when they can access their scripts and feedback following ratification of their results;

- the format of feedback and the latest date of return will be communicated to students in the module outline/syllabus/specification.
 - Ensure students are able to benefit from their feedback and use it for upcoming assessment tasks.
 - Relate feedback to the assessment criteria and descriptors where a module specific rubric has been used. Feedback should but need not be limited to the criteria listed in the module specific marking rubric as an opportunity to provide feedback that is constructive and developmental.
 - Provide feedback in sufficient quantity, quality, and detail to enable students to understand how future, similar work might be improved.
 - Facilitate accessibility of feedback and make reasonable accommodation where appropriate.
- 4.2 It is College Policy that each Faculty/Department can have their own subject or assessment specific marking criteria that will be framed by the College's generic marking criteria. Feedback on assessments should, where appropriate, make reference to the Faculty/College marking criteria.
- 4.3 Departments should endeavour to ensure that all feedback adheres to the principles outlined above and that there is consistency of feedback between markers.
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