

Assessment, feedback and feedforward guidance

Introduction

This document is to be read in conjunction with UHI's Assessment, Feedback and Feedforward Policy. Additional guidance (based on outputs from various sources such as staff, students, module and programme evaluations, UHISA, and the NSS) will be incorporated as the Policy is implemented.

Feedforward

The concept of feedforward is used throughout the Policy and guidance document. As Smith¹ states "While feedback focuses on a student's current performance, and may simply justify the grade awarded, feed forward looks ahead to subsequent assignments and offers constructive guidance on how to do better. A combination of both feedback and feed forward helps ensure that assessment has a developmental impact on learning."

Staff provide students with both feedback and feedforward and this is often referred to as feedback. The term feedforward is used to clearly indicate to students that the information received not only pertains to the assessed work, but also contains information that must inform subsequent work. It is also recommended that feedforward be clearly identified so that students understand its application in subsequent work.

Guidance – enhancement development

This section constitutes guidance to be implemented at the discretion of the Deans, SNLs, PLs, MLs and other staff as appropriate.

The following guidelines will be added to UHI's Learning Standards on assessment and feedback.² Programme Teams should utilise these guidelines as appropriate to ensure an effective assessment and feedback/feedforward process. Assessment and feedback/feedforward should be viewed as part of an extended dialogue between the tutor and students.

1. Where possible, staff should set aside time during lectures to briefly discuss summative assessment. This will enable students to ask questions either during the lecture or by e-mail³
2. Where possible, staff should set aside time during lectures to give feedforward on how students can improve their work.
3. Staff must provide clear written instructions in the course materials and, where possible, should repeat these during lectures.

¹ Smith, R. 2010. Feed Forward [Online]

<http://iiscdesignstudio.pbworks.com/w/page/52947129/Feed%20forward>

² These guidelines should be viewed as a starting point to be built upon by Programme Teams. See <http://uhi-mahara.co.uk/view/view.php?id=606>

³ See Royce Saddler, D. 2010. Beyond Feedback: developing student capacity in complex appraisal. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*. 35(5):535-550 [Online]
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02602930903541015>

4. Where possible students should be given the opportunity to submit essay plans or project outlines as a formative exercise well ahead of the summative assessment deadline. If adopted, brief, informal feedback must be provided. It is suggested that Turnitin's Originality Checker be used as an educational tool. This allows students to view their originality reports and also provides a quick way for staff to provide informal feedback by using the feedback comment drag and drop facility.
5. It is recommended that Turnitin's GradeMark be used for marking. Individual written and/or audio comments may be added to the assignment and Turnitin's library may be used to drag and drop stock phrases. Note: personalised feedback/feedforward must always accompany the use of stock phrases.
6. Feedback/feedforward should be limited to the most obvious improvements, and more subtle improvements should only be advised for stronger students who have mastered basic issues.
7. It is recommended that feedforward be clearly identified so that students understand its application in subsequent work.
8. Students should be encouraged to look at their work and feedback/feedforward and consider how their work could have been improved and what changes should be made in their next assessment;⁴
9. It is recommended (where possible) that mock examinations and specimen answers be provided. These reassure the students about what is required and help them prepare effectively.
10. When students miss the assessment deadline, staff should consider e-mailing them. If implemented, this e-mail should be copied to their PATs. Note: it must be emphasised that this is guidance, not policy. Staff workload must be considered prior to implementing this.
11. Assessments also provide the tutor with information on the effectiveness of their teaching. Staff should review subsequent student improvement in the light of feedback provided and reflect on additional actions which may be needed to better support students in the learning process. These actions should be recorded in their live action plans.

⁴ *ibid*