

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

FEEDBACK POLICY

Feedback tells students about their progress towards achieving intended learning outcomes. This information can help them to improve their learning (which is the purpose of teaching) and so help them to enhance their performance in assessment. It is also important to ensure that students engage with the feedback they receive. Their level of engagement is strongly influenced by their evaluation of their own ability to understand and apply the comments they receive and the benefits they will receive from doing so.

The School of Social Sciences Feedback Policy sets out the principles which govern the mechanisms for providing feedback to students on their formative and summative work. These principles have been developed in line with the University's Assessment Framework and the Faculty of Humanities' Feedback Policy, taking account of existing practices and consultation with student focus groups.

Principles of the School of Social Sciences Feedback Policy

- 1. Provide clear information to students about the feedback process.**
- 2. Provide feedback on formative and summative assessments as appropriate and in a timely manner that permits students time to react to the feedback in such a way as to enhance their performance in subsequent assessments.**
 - 2.1 Where there is further assessment to be completed for the unit, feedback should be provided no later than 4 weeks from the submission date and before completion of the next assessment.**
 - 2.2 Where there is no further assessment for a unit, students must have the opportunity to receive feedback as appropriate and in time to be able to improve performance in further programme assessments.**
 - 2.3 Procedures should be in place to provide students with the opportunity to receive feedback on their examination performance.**
- 3. Wherever possible, feedback should be personal and provide guidance indicating to students how to improve their performance.**
- 4. Feedback should be clear, legible and understood by the student.**
- 5. The quality of feedback and effectiveness of feedback mechanism is monitored.**

Comments on the School's Feedback Policy

There are two over-arching principles that govern the School's policy:

- Feedback should be provided in a timely manner that permits students to react to the feedback in such a way as to enhance their performance in subsequent assessments.
- Feedback should be as personal as possible to the individual student.

These two principles are considered the key to the enhancement of the student experience and the improvement of student satisfaction.

1. Provide clear information to students about the feedback process.

It is important to explain to students what constitutes feedback and how it will be provided.

- Some time should be spent on the topic of feedback during induction for new students explaining the importance, form and availability of feedback.
- Information should also be provided in programme handbooks and course materials (course guides) about the mechanisms by which students will receive feedback and the forms it will take for both formative and summative work. This is to ensure that
 - students have a clear understanding of the assessment process and the marking and grading criteria;
 - students realise when and how they will receive feedback on their work.

2. Provide feedback on formative and summative assessments as appropriate and in a timely manner that permits students time to react to the feedback in such a way as to enhance their performance in subsequent assessments.

2.1 Where there is further assessment to be completed for the unit, feedback should be provided no later than 4 weeks from the submission date and before completion of the next assessment.

2.2 Where there is no further assessment for a unit, students must have the opportunity to receive feedback as appropriate and in time to be able to improve performance in further programme assessments.

Formative feedback (feedback given on assessments before the end of the course unit) and summative feedback (feedback given on assessments at the end of the

course unit) are not mutually exclusive. From the academic year 2009/10, all of the School's undergraduate and postgraduate course units should have at least one form of assessment that provides formative feedback to students. (This assessment may contribute to the final mark for the course unit.) The timing of feedback must be such that the feedback can be used by the student to respond and improve performance in a unit and throughout their programme. Importantly, programmes and courses should give consideration to submission dates for course work to ensure that the schedule for submission and feedback fits with relevant dates for future assessment.

2.3 Procedures should be in place to provide students with the opportunity to receive feedback on their examination performance.

There is a lot that students can reflect on about their examination performance in order to improve their results for future units. To facilitate this, large course units may provide generic feedback on the cohort's performance. Where no generic feedback is provided, other procedures should be in place. Students should contact the course convenor (or academic advisor if there is concern about the overall examination performance.) Procedures are in place to facilitate individual requests to see scripts/marking sheets (though students cannot take them away with them).

3. Wherever possible, feedback should be personal and provide guidance indicating to students how to improve their performance.

Formative feedback should contain

- responses to points well made within the work as well as to its weak points;
- suggestions for how students can improve their work;
- a provisional mark along with formative comments.

4. Feedback should be clear, legible and understood by the student.

It is the responsibility of the assessor to provide clear and understandable feedback. Written comments should be legible and it should be indicated which part of the work comment refers to. Students should have the opportunity to seek clarification and further feedback from their lecturer.

5. The quality of feedback and effectiveness of feedback mechanism is monitored.

For purposes of enhancing and maintaining the quality of feedback the School has in place, both at discipline area/programme level and at School level, mechanisms to monitor the provision and the effectiveness and the quality of the feedback being provided by students:

- Course Convenors have responsibility for monitoring feedback provided by other teachers on their courses;

- Programme or Discipline Area Directors of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies will review the provision of feedback in selected courses each semester;
- the School's Director of Undergraduate/Postgraduate Studies, together with the Undergraduate/Postgraduate Manager, will undertake further spot-checks;
- staff-student forums should regularly discuss feedback provision in their area.