

Effective Assessment Feedback

The key aim of assessment feedback should be to support students to become more self-regulatory in managing their own learning as part of sustainable assessment practice; a focus on three core areas is recommended: Assessment Literacy; Facilitating Improvements in Learning; Holistic Assessment Design.

To support assessment literacy we should:

1. Clarify what the assessment is and how it is organised. Explain the principles underpinning the design of assessment so that students can understand the relevance and value of it.
2. Provide explicit guidance to students on the requirements of each assessment (e.g. clarification of assessment criteria; learning outcomes; good academic practice).
3. Clarify with students the different forms, sources, and timings of feedback available including e-learning opportunities.
4. Clarify the role of the student in the feedback process as an active participant (seeking, using, and giving feedback to self and peers; developing networks of support), and not just as a receiver of feedback.
5. Provide opportunities for students to work with assessment criteria and to work with examples of work at different grade levels in order to understand 'what constitutes good.'

To facilitate improvements in learning we should:

6. Ensure that the curriculum design enables sufficient time for students to apply the lessons learnt from formative feedback in their summative assessments.
7. Give clear and focused feedback on how students can improve their work including signposting the most important areas to address (what was good; what could be improved; and most importantly, how to improve).
8. Ensure that formative feedback precedes summative assessment; that the links between formative feedback and the requirements of summative assessment are clear.
9. Ensure that there are opportunities and support for students to develop self-assessment/self-monitoring skills, and training in peer feedback to support self-understanding of assessment and feedback.
10. Ensure training opportunities on assessment feedback for all those engaged in curriculum delivery to enhance shared understanding of assessment requirements.

To promote holistic assessment design we should:

11. Ensure that opportunities for formative assessment are integral to curriculum design at module and programme levels.
12. Ensure that all core¹ resources are available to students electronically through the virtual learning environment (e.g. Blackboard) and other relevant sources from the start of the semester to enable students to take responsibility for organising their own learning.
13. Provide an appropriate range and choice of assessment opportunities throughout a programme of study.
14. Ensure that there are opportunities for students to feedback on learning and teaching, both individually, and via the Students' Union's Academic Representatives, during a taught module as well as at the end of it, to enable reasonable amendments to be made during the teaching of the module subject to the discretion of the module leader.

¹ Core = handbook; assessment guidelines; formative & summative tasks and deadlines; resources for each session