



CODE OF PRACTICE ON ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX N

Policy on Feedback on Assessment

2023-24

Applicable to all cohorts

In the Code of Practice on Assessment and all Appendices the term “student” includes apprentices on degree apprenticeship programmes

Policy on Feedback on Assessment

1. Background

The UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance on Assessment (guiding principle 6 and 7) indicate that feedback on assessment should be timely, constructive and developmental. This policy provides a framework which should be used to guide Departmental policy for providing students with feedback on assessment. The University recognises the diversity and range of learning, teaching and assessment practices across the institution, and this policy also aims to allow these diverse practices to be taken into account.

2. Terms of Reference and Policy Aims

2.1 'Feedback' in this Policy is used to refer to comments (whether written or oral) given by assessors to students on an assessment task.

'Assessment' in this Policy is a generic term for a set of processes that measure the outcomes of students' learning in terms of knowledge acquired, understanding developed and skills gained.

2.2 This Policy will explore the different types and styles of feedback and provide a framework to guide Departments in providing effective feedback to students.

2.3 Feedback can be provided following both formative and summative types of assessment, the definitions of which are provided below:

- Formative Assessment: is designed to provide learners with feedback on progress and inform development.
- Summative Assessment: provides a measure of achievement or failure in respect of a learner's performance in relation to the intended learning outcomes of the programme of study.

2.4 It is expected that the following framework should be applied in a way which is most appropriate to the nature of Departmental assessment strategies and in conjunction with suitable alternative practices better suited to certain subject pedagogies.

2.5 Each Department should have a written statement of its policy on the provision of feedback to students. It is intended that Staff-Student Liaison Committees should be involved in the development of Departmental policies. The effectiveness of Departmental practice in the provision of feedback on assessment will be evaluated via the Periodic Review process.

3. Principles of Feedback

Underpinning this Policy are the principles that feedback must:

- (i) be closely related to the intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria;
- (ii) be provided in a format which is appropriate to the type of assessment;
- (iii) commend student's achievement and clearly identify areas for improvement;
- (iv) be provided within an appropriate timescale to enable students to review and act on in order to enhance their performance in subsequent assessments.

4. Communication

- 4.1 Transparent information on the type of assessment feedback mechanisms operating in a Department should be provided to staff and students. It should be clearly communicated to students what method of assessment will be adopted, how results will be communicated and what format of feedback they may expect. An agreed timeframe for the submission of assessed work and the provision of feedback should also be provided for each assessment (see also point 5.3 of this Policy document for guidelines).
- 4.2 Details of the assessment criteria and learning outcomes for the module/course and information on how feedback will be related to these criteria and outcomes must also be clearly communicated, as well as details of where students can obtain further advice.
- 4.3 The most appropriate place to communicate this information is the Departmental Student Handbook or equivalent, issued to students at the beginning of the course or academic year. For ease of reference this information should also be made available via the Departmental Website or through Canvas.

5. Timeliness of Feedback

- 5.1 Formative assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning experience and providing formative feedback is essential to enable students to evaluate their progress and improve on their performance.
- 5.2 Departments are therefore highly recommended to provide the opportunity for students to gain formative feedback on their learning during a module to help prepare for summative assessment.
- 5.3 Examples of ways in which formative feedback might be achieved include:
 - Written feedback
 - Oral feedback in class
 - Online assessment exercises
 - Computer generated audio feedback
 - Peer feedback
 - Self-assessment
- 5.4 Appropriate timescales for the provision of feedback to students should be established and published by Departments and these expectations should be met through the planning of the schedule and volume of assessment; the University considers three working weeks to be an appropriate maximum timescale for providing feedback in most circumstances.
- 5.5 Where it is impossible to adhere to the required timescales, Departments should inform students and ensure that feedback is provided in time for students to be able to improve on their performance in subsequent assessments.
- 5.6 Departments will monitor the provision of feedback to ensure adherence to the agreed timescales.

6. Content of Feedback

- 6.1 Feedback on assessment should contain enough detail to enable students to evaluate and improve their performance.
- 6.2 When returning written work, it should be annotated containing comments relating directly to the relevant assessment criteria to enable students to identify areas for improvement based on their performance in relation to the expected standards described in the criteria.

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- 6.3 Written feedback should be legible and students should be given the opportunity to seek further advice if any comments or the mark obtained are not clear. To ensure a consistent standard of feedback across a Department, a feedback pro-forma, where appropriate, will be used when providing written feedback; this is not intended to make the process of feedback mechanistic but to close the loop relating feedback to learning outcomes.
- 6.4 It is not a requirement of the University that examination scripts are returned to students however, under the terms of the Data Protection Act, data subjects are entitled to request details of any personal data that is being kept about them. The University needs to be assured of the data subject's identity before a search is made (further details of the Data Protection Policy can be found at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/dp/dppolicy.htm>). Examiners should bear in mind students' rights under this Act if they write comments on examination scripts; also, staff may show examination scripts to students in a controlled setting as part of feedback.
- 6.5 Departments should, wherever possible, provide generic group feedback to students on their performance in examinations which should:
- (i) include a general commentary of students' performance including identifying common strengths and weaknesses;
 - (ii) highlight those examination questions on which students' performance could be improved and suggest strategies for improving performance in those questions.
- 6.6 Departments should provide opportunities for students to receive individual feedback on their performance in examinations. The arrangements for providing this type of feedback should be agreed with the relevant Staff Student Liaison Committee and details should be made available to students as part of the Department's feedback policy.

7. Guidance and Staff Support

- 7.1 Departments must make it clear to students when feedback is being provided.
- 7.2 Departments must establish and publicise the nature and extent of feedback that students can expect to receive in accordance with the assessment method.
- 7.3 Departments must ensure that all marking descriptors and assessment criteria are communicated clearly to all students and staff.
- 7.4 Departments must carefully consider the timing of the provision of feedback on assessment and these timescales should be clearly communicated to students in advance of the assessment being set. The University considers three weeks to be an appropriate maximum timescale in which to provide feedback.
- 7.5 Departments are responsible for ensuring that all staff involved in marking and providing feedback to students are fully prepared for this activity, particularly new members of staff.
- 7.6 The role of feedback can be further enhanced in the learning process by the development of reflexive skills in curricula so that students themselves are prepared and motivated to make effective use of the available feedback. These skills can be further developed through the academic adviser system.
- 7.7 For further advice on assessment and feedback, including resources and details of staff development workshops contact the Centre for Innovation in Education.