

Feedback: How to make it work for you



**Learning and Teaching Matters:
Quick Guides for Students No.1**

What is feedback?

Feedback is information about how you are doing in your work: usually your performance in assessment, but it can also include other learning activities. Your School will inform you of the feedback procedures on your programme.

Feedback has many different forms and sources. As an effective, independent learner, you should recognise and seek out different types of feedback.

Feedback can include:

- Grades and Marks
- Written comments on an assessed piece of work
- Verbal comments on your project, design or experiment
- Comments on drafts
- Discussions with your Personal Tutor
- Verbal comments in lectures, tutorials, studios, labs and field work/trips
- Generic comments delivered to the whole group or class
- Discussions with your fellow students
- Responses to online discussions
- Responses to emails
- One-to-one discussions with support services
- Informal discussions

Feedback can be provided by:

- Lecturers, Tutors, Supervisors, Demonstrators and Technicians
- Personal Tutors
- Effective Learning Advisors and other staff in student support services
- Your fellow students: informally or in a formal peer group
- The audience you are presenting to
- Placement employers
- Personal response systems in lecturers
- Online assessment systems

One of the most providers of feedback is YOU!

Read, Reflect, Act

Making the Most of Feedback

Heriot-Watt University aims to support you in becoming a confident, independent learner. Feedback is a key part of your learning experience, as it is designed to help you to learn and improve.

Feedback is only useful to you if you read, reflect and act on it. Here are some tips to help you make the most of your feedback

- Approach feedback as a **learning opportunity**; be open and willing to learn from it; be **proactive** in seeking feedback.
- Find out promptly **what type** of feedback you can expect, and **how** and **when** it will be provided.
- If you have completed an assignment, **self-reflect** before submission. What feedback would you give yourself?
- Make sure you **collect** your feedback, or **attend** any feedback sessions, or **download and save** electronic feedback.
- **Listen carefully** to any verbal feedback, making notes as appropriate for reflection later on.
- Once you have received feedback, make sure **you understand it** – if not, **ask for clarification** (eg from your lecturer, Personal Tutor).
- Take time to **review** your feedback (written and verbal) and **reflect** on it: *What have you done well? What might you improve on? How will you use your feedback to inform your next piece of work?*
- Request **advice** if you need: from your School or support services (eg study skills) or consult online self-help guides.
- **Discuss** feedback with your fellow students.
- For your next tasks, **refer back** to feedback and your notes on it.
- **Give feedback to staff** on their feedback practices (eg surveys).

Feedback Principles

These Feedback Principles were developed in partnership with HWU Student Union and apply to academic feedback provided to HWU students across all locations and modes of study. You can expect your feedback to be:

- **Constructive** – feedback should review your academic performance, making clear what you have done well and what you need to do to improve
- **Supportive of Your Learning** – feedback should be a learning experience, helping you to develop
- **Timely** – assessed coursework (except some large scale projects and dissertations) should be returned within 3 teaching weeks
- **Inclusive** – feedback, in a variety of forms, should be available to all HWU students, whether studying on campus, with a partner or by independent distance learning.
- **Accessible** – feedback should be clear, understandable and easy to access
- **Relevant** – feedback should be related to the assessment criteria and expectations provided in advance of your assignment



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<http://www1.hw.ac.uk/committees/tb/tb-policies.htm>

