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. All HWU students can expect their 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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Giving Effective Feedback

Learning and Teaching Matters: Quick Guides for Staff No.1

Forms and Sources of Feedback

Feedback has many different forms and sources. Students will learn more effectively through being provided with, and making use of, different types of feedback.

Students should be informed of the feedback procedures at the start of, and throughout, their programme.

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 Personal Tutors
- Verbal comments in lectures, tutorials, studios, labs and field work/trips
- Generic comments delivered to the whole group or class
- Discussions with 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
- Fellow students: informally or in a formal peer group
- The audience to which students are presenting to
- Placement employers
- Personal response systems in lecturers
- Online assessment systems

Students often do not realise that feedback can be provided in a diversity of ways. An explanation of feedback at the start of a course can help students recognise and value different types of feedback.

Providing Effective Feedback

Heriot-Watt University aims to support students in becoming confident, independent learners; feedback is a key part of the student learning experience, as it is designed to help students to learn and improve.

Some Tips for Providing Effective Feedback:

- Feedback is a **learning opportunity**: students should be reminded regularly of the need to engage with it and be willing to learn from it (*Read, Reflect, Act!*), eg: reviewing feedback on receipt and clarifying any queries; referring back to previous feedback for next assignments.

- The **types** of feedback to be given should be made clear to students, as well as its **purpose**, and **how** and **when** it will be provided to them.

- There are many options for **efficient, yet effective**, feedback:

• online self-assessments with automated marking	• feedback statement banks
• self-evaluations submitted with assignments	• Generic feedback to whole group (verbal, recorded audio file or email file), with shorter, more specific comments for individuals
• peer review and commentary	
• standard feedback proforma	• ask students to identify two areas on which they would like feedback
• examples of marked assignments of varying standards	

- **Timely feedback**: students will engage with, and apply, feedback if the subject and assignment are still current for them and if they receive the feedback in time to inform their next tasks.

- Feedback as **more than correction**: feedback can be used to foster a deeper understanding of the subject; to enhance learning; to provide positive encouragement. Linking assignments helps students to act on feedback.