



# Using feedback to improve

Seeing feedback as an opportunity to reflect, learn and take action to improve can be challenging at times. However, learning to use feedback effectively is a valuable skill which will help you develop not only in your studies but also your career.

## How might you receive feedback at uni?

- During your studies you may receive feedback from your lecturers, tutors, peers and through self-evaluation.
- Feedback, either written or verbal, may come in the form of:
  - Comments on individual or group assignments.
  - Comments or answers (online or face-to-face) during classes such as lectures, tutorials, practicals, placements, etc. This could be to groups or individually.
  - Online communications via emails, or forum posts.
  - Answers or comments to online or in-class quizzes.
  - Assignment information –assessment criteria, marking guides, rubrics or feedback forms.
  - Self-directed learning tasks, e.g. textbook quizzes.

## What can you expect from feedback?

Feedback could be a mixture of grades, comments, and constructive feedback. It usually identifies what you have done well as well as where and how you can improve. Feedback is designed to help you in your learning and improve your skills.

## Responding to feedback

Whether you have done well in an assignment task or not so well, there is always an opportunity to learn from feedback. While feedback may provide an opportunity to improve, receiving feedback may not always be comfortable. You may be nervous or even disappointed, especially if a lot of time and effort has gone into a task and the results don't reflect this. Managing these feelings and taking a positive approach towards feedback are important as they allow you to take action.

Some tips to help with this are:

- Don't take this personally. The feedback is about one task, not your ability and not you.
- To help gain perspective, remind yourself that the feedback you have been given relates to one task in one course of your whole degree.
- Take one or two days to reflect on the feedback. Time helps develop objectivity and diffuse any emotions. When reflecting:
  - review the assignment task, the assignment question and the marking criteria
  - cross-reference the feedback to your work and look for examples
- Rather than only focusing on the mark or critique, also pay attention to what you did well.
- Think of feedback as suggestions for where you can make improvements.



## How can you use feedback to improve?

- View all the feedback, both positive and negative, as valuable.
- Identify the areas you need or want to improve. If unsure, speak with your tutor.
- If you have received feedback for more than one assignment, identify any common areas you need to work on and prioritise these.
- Be pro-active and make a plan for improvement (see below). If you need strategies on how to improve in the areas you have identified, speak with a Learning Adviser.
- Put your plan into action. Revisit it after your next assignment to see if you have made improvements. If necessary, revise your plan or seek further advice on strategies.

## How to plan for improvement using feedback

### Step 1

Based on your assignment feedback, identify areas for improvement and note them down.

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### Step 2

Consider if the feedback relates to content, academic writing, research skills, language, referencing or another area. Who might you be able to help you improve in this? What strategies or resources could you use to find out what you need to know? If unsure, make a time with a Learning Adviser to talk about this.

### Step 3

To improve academic skills and get help with your next assessment task, refer to the numerous Study Help resources and services to give you some guidance.

### Step 4

Using what you have identified in the steps above, write a plan of action which will help you make your improvements.

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### Step 5

Check the feedback on your next assignment. Have you made improvements? If not, try revising your action plan or speak with a Learning Adviser. If yes, well done!