# Faculty of Science Tutorial

# Feedback

# Aims:

1. To explain to students what feedback is and the different forms that it can take.
2. To develop realistic student expectations about feedback.
3. To convey the message that feedback is not simply a justification for the mark: Identified strengths and weaknesses should be considered.
4. To learn from students want they expect in terms of feedback and/or what feedback means to them.

# Suggested Structure:

Time required = ~20 minutes

## Preamble

It is suggested that you commence the tutorial with a brief discussion of existing marking and feedback practices, based on your experience. Explain that all marking is done ‘in-house’, and a sample may be double marked before validation by an External Examiner according to the University’s moderation policy. Perhaps include illustrative time scales to convey the time needed to mark work e.g. 30 students x 10 minutes = 5 hours. Stress that the University policy is feedback within 15 working days, so this does not include weekends and is effectively 3 weeks. Note that there is always a compromise between detailed feedback returned only after a few weeks and superficial feedback returned within a few days.

It is also worth stressing that programmes try as far as possible to avoid the clustering of assignment deadlines but it is not possible to evenly distribute deadlines during the academic year. In the first few weeks, students will not have had sufficient taught sessions for there to be associated coursework to be submitted. Coursework deadlines cannot be set during the final few weeks of each year to avoid clashing with exams.

## Discussion questions

1. Ask students to name some different types of feedback, and different ways that feedback can be provided.

There might be a range of responses here, including:

* + - Written comments on work
    - Peer discussions and peer assessment
    - Conversations with staff in corridors/after lectures
    - % marks
    - Email exchanges
    - A physical reaction e.g. a raised eyebrow

Summarise that feedback types can be informal or formal, and may be visual or spoken.

1. Ask the group to define feedback.

Students should recognise that feedback is information from staff or peers that provides guidance on progress. For summative assessments, e.g. final year report, it might also be used to justify a mark.

1. Ask students what they do with feedback.

Students need to recognise that feedback should be accorded the same (higher?) status as lecture notes. They should reflect on comments received and identify the areas where they did well, areas for improvement and any action required on their part. Clarification should be sought from the provider of the feedback, were required. In this way, they will be prepared for future activities.

Faculty of Science, 2012

## Summary

**F**ind out what is required before starting a task or assignment

**E**nsurethat you schedule sufficient time to complete the task

**E**valuate your own work before handing it in

**D**iscuss the feedback that you receive with others

**B**e willing to participate in peer assessment activities

**A**ctively seek feedback from a variety of sources

**C**onsider both the **strengths** and **weaknesses** identified in your feedback

**K**eep your feedback, reflect and use it to prepare for future work and activities. Revisit, as required, to assess your progress

Adapted from, ‘Feedback is a dialogue’, University of Strathclyde, 2011