



# Planning for timely feedback that works

*Deliberately designing feedback for learning has the added benefit that students recognise that **they are cared about** and that their learning matters.*

## 1. Engaging students in feedback process prior to submitting the final assessment

**For learners to participate in, and act on feedback they first need to recognise when it is happening!**

Therefore, for all the examples in this section, you may need to signal THIS IS FEEDBACK. Students also need time to act on feedback received, so scheduling the examples below with enough time is important. The examples in this section have been collected from both the literature, and from the work of academics and learning designers across UQ.

### 1.1 Feedforward: Pre-task guidance - what does the rubric mean?

Students are provided with class or tutorial time to engage with the marking criteria/rubric as well as exemplars of the assignment prior to completing their own assessment task. This form of pre-assessment feedback promotes dialogue with the students and provides opportunity to clarify expectations. Guidance before the task can help reduce student frustration and is more impactful than feedback after the task is completed.

### 1.2 Feedforward: Pre-task guidance - rubric or criteria sheet discussion board

Example from: LAWS5215 - Semester 1, 2018. 273 students. Where there is no class time available to discuss an assessment in depth, you can populate a discussion board forum with some FAQ about the assessment and what particular words in the criteria sheet mean. You could include extracts of previous submissions (de-identified) to illustrate your answers. Encourage students to read the criteria sheet and add their questions to the Discussion Board forum. The benefits of conducting pre-task guidance in this way are it:

1. significantly cuts down on individual student emails
2. is equitable as all students can see the questions and answers.

### 1.3 Let's practice and mark a simpler one first

Example from: LAWS5215 - Semester 1, 2018. 273 students. A synchronous tutorial was dedicated to "marking" a simpler version of the assessment task together as a class. Students had to complete a task that was exactly the same as what they had to do for their assessment, just with a simpler fact scenario. Students needed to submit it to their tutor in advance of the tutorial. Through marking the task, students could compare what was done in class to their own responses and were able to gain an understanding of what a quality response should look like. **Reflection:** this needs to be scheduled carefully. Tutors need enough time to look at what students have done, so students need to complete the task at least a week in advance of the 'marking' tutorial. This may mean the topic needs to be taught earlier in the semester to allow students to do this.

#### 1.4 Generating internal feedback through self-appraisal

Example from: PHIP7201 – Semester 1, 2019. 20 students. For their workplace performance appraisal task, students conduct a self-assessment of their performance using the assessment rubric. Students submit their self-appraisal to their placement supervisor ahead of their evaluation meeting as a strategy to promote assessment literacy and to promote a dialogue with the supervisor during the meeting.

#### 1.5 Generating internal feedback by looking at exemplars of different quality

Students generate internal feedback by comparing their current knowledge against exemplars of different quality. To unlock the power of internal feedback, teachers need to help students turn natural comparisons that they are making anyway, into formal and explicit comparisons to help them build the capacity to exploit their own comparison processes. See Nicol, *Exploiting natural comparison processes*

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### The power of internal feedback: exploiting natural comparison processes

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#### ABSTRACT

Students generate internal feedback by comparing their current knowledge against some reference information. That information might be planned for by teachers – usually as comments on students' performance – although most information is accessed by students themselves during task engagement, from their interactions with others, with resources and from memories of prior performances. Nearly all research on feedback in higher education focuses on comments as the comparison information. Ongoing and natural feedback comparisons with other information sources have been neglected: hence their potential for learning remains unexplored. To unlock the power of internal feedback, teachers need to have students turn some natural comparisons that they are making anyway, into formal and explicit comparisons and help them build the capacity to exploit their own comparison processes. To envision the possibilities, I present a new model of how students generate internal feedback as they self and co-regulate their learning, using information from multiple sources. I also synthesise two bodies of research to show how comparisons with different kinds of information, singly and in combination, can alter the nature and quality of the internal feedback that students generate. This lens of comparison changes everything. It calls for a fundamental shift in feedback practices and research.

#### KEYWORDS

Assessment, internal feedback, comparison processes, self-regulation, information

## 1.6 Developing Evaluative Judgement: Final Site Report Scaffolding Module

Example from: ARCS3010 - Semester 2, 2020. 25 students. Rather than getting students to do a draft and receive transmission style feedback comments, Alison Crowther and the eAssessment team developed a scaffolding module that would allow students to examine previous examples of final reports and evaluate the quality of key features of those reports. The module involved an investment of time, but it can now be used every year.

The screenshot shows a digital interface for a scaffolding module. On the left, a text editor displays an excerpt from a site report. The text describes excavation methods, soil types (white sand and beige sand), and decision-making during the process. On the right, a 'Method' section contains four numbered evaluation questions with corresponding text input boxes for student responses.

2 of 4 Automatic Zoom

respectively. In the first year, dumpy and tripods were used to record spatial data; however, since 2014, total stations have been used instead (Report 14).

For the excavation this year, the Dalek team decided to continue in arbitrary spits in conjunction with the single-context recording system (see MOLAS 1994). As the start levels of this season's excavation appeared to be near the base of the site, and chronology is an important aspect of the aims, a spit size of 2cm was determined to be appropriate. For one context, C204L, the layer had to be excavated as a whole context, rather than arbitrarily (Figure 4 in Appendix). This is because the context was a very loose white sand that sat atop a very compacted beige sand (C205M) (Figure 5 in Appendix). The white sand was less than 2cm thick in some areas and more than 2cm thick in others. As the white sand was very loose and the beige sand was very compacted, it was easy to follow the natural contours during excavation, and keep the contexts separate. The next context, C205M was originally accidentally recorded as C204M but was amended to C205M after excavation.

The spits were dug by hand using trowels, brushes, pans and buckets. Previous excavations revealed larger artefacts so dry sieving using 8mm mesh was considered

3 Method

Read through this excerpt of the methods used in the excavation.

1. Evaluate the clarity with which the methods have been described and consider if you would be able to replicate this process from reading the report.
2. Comment on how effectively they have used literature to justify the methods.
3. Identify where decision making is evident in the excerpt. Provide some examples here.
4. Have any results been included in the methods? Should they be?

### Comparing recommendations

#### Excerpt #1

what type of metal erosion it is from, indicating the specific item or material the household had access to. The charcoal from each spit could also be radiocarbon dated to see when it was burned, thus more accurately dating each spit. A sample of charcoal was collected to be radiocarbon dated but we did not end up testing it. The ceramic could also be more closely compared to other ceramics found by other groups excavating in the same grid. That would be ideal as it would show a relationship, if any, to the grid site as a whole.

#### Excerpt #2

Lastly, there was little to no evidence of cross-cultural contact, with the small amount of shell and one possible microlith likely falling in from the South side of the gully. The South side appears to be an Indigenous shell midden and lithic knapping site, and if dated will be situated in the regional chronology. Not much information is left to obtain from Grid Unit C2 as it was excavated to natural. However, the long strip of metal remains to be excavated. As one end of it resides in B2, that Grid Unit should be excavated next year to extract that artefact. Lastly, the yellow-orange substance in the North East corner should be sampled for identification.

Compare and contrast these two excerpts detailing recommendations from two different reports (both are for the same grid unit in the same year). How do they compare?

Ideally, students would then apply what they had learned from evaluating previous reports to the construction and writing of their own professional standard site reports.

The module provided an online repository of their thinking about what a quality site report looks like, what mistakes not to repeat etc.

Students were able to complete the module in their site extraction groups if they wanted to and engage in peer discussions of what quality looks like.

### Improvements for Sem 2, 2021

Schedule completion of the module as early as possible – i.e. once students are far enough along in the semester to properly engage with the exemplars.

Dedicate some synchronous class time to discussing the module – student responses indicated their evaluative judgement capability is not well developed, and while the module provided an excellent way for students to engage in feedback processes to inform their final report, they needed assistance with this.



## 2. Feedback embedded in the assessment design

One of the most common ways to embed feedback in your assessment design is to construct two-part or multi-stage assessments. This does not mean that you should increase the number of assessments in your course. Think through the learning outcomes and what students need to demonstrate and construct the two parts of the assessment to achieve that. Each part of the assessment should be given sufficient weight for students to meaningfully engage with it.

### 2.1 Substantial piece of work with a “planning” milestone

Multiple examples in classes of various sizes. Four weeks before students hand in their final assessment, they must submit the planning work they have done in preparation for the final submission. Depending on the discipline and the genre of writing, this might involve submitting:

- a project plan
- a skeleton structure of their essay article with an annotated bibliography of the literature they intend to rely on
- an annotated design sketch
- a preliminary hypothesis derived from the literature with an outline of the intended experiment design to test that hypothesis.

### 2.2 Task Series to build capability

Students complete a series of similar tasks (e.g. lab reports or placement reflections) where they receive feedback which can be applied to the next iteration of the task. These tasks could be completed in an ePortfolio which involves the collection of learning artefacts and encourage revisiting of previous work and provide opportunity for internal feedback and uptake of feedback.

### 2.3 Nested assessments to build deep expertise

‘*Nested*’ assessment does not mean 5 quizzes hidden in one assessment item called Tutorial Assessment. That’s just lots of assessment, unless the tutorial program is structured in such a way that feedback can be used from one week to the next. Nested assessment involves students working on a task or tasks at an increasingly deeper level of expertise or exploration/analysis of a topic. They should be able to apply the feedback on each piece of assessment to develop greater expertise. Assessment items are designed to start superficial and explore/analyse more deeply each time.

### 2.4 Two-part tasks

In a two-part assessment, students complete a first task, such as an individual or group oral presentation. The students receive peer and/or teacher feedback and complete a second task such as a written assignment on the same topic incorporating the feedback from the first part of the task. Carless provides an example in civil engineering where oral presentations on a bridge design task included student questioning and teacher guidance which informed the development of the written report which was submitted later (Carless, et al., 2011).

Another example which is good for Identity Verified Assessment is for students to submit a written piece first, receive feedback from peers and or teachers and then complete an oral assessment where as well as discussing their written submission, you could ask about the feedback received, what they think it means, how they have applied it etc.

### 2.5 Draft with re-work

Students submit a draft assignment and received detailed feedback. Students re-work assignment taking on board the feedback and submit a final assignment. A portion of the grade is dedicated to evidencing they have utilised the feedback (e.g. in a feedback coversheet or reflection).

Example from: MKTG1501 Semester 1 2020. 700+ students. Students submit a marketing proposal through their ePortfolio and receive feedback from the tutors on each criteria in the qualitative rubric. Students re-

work their assignment and submit a final version weighted at 40% with 10% of the grade rewarded to students who used their feedback in the final submission.

## 2.6 Peer Feedback via a two-part exam/quiz

In a two-stage exam, students first complete and turn in the exam or quiz individually and then, working in small groups, answer the exam questions again. During the group part students receive immediate, targeted feedback on their solutions from their fellow students and see alternative approaches to the problems. This makes the exam or quiz itself a valuable learning experience, which is particularly appropriate in subjects where semi-regular quizzes are meant to build student knowledge for the final exam. Students must be told why the exam/quizzes are being conducted this way. The majority of marks should be allocated to the individual completion so students are still motivated to prepare thoroughly rather than 'coasting' in the group stage. To read more about the implementation of a two-part exam/quiz, see [https://cwsei.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/cwsei/resources/instructor/Two-stage\\_Exams.pdf](https://cwsei.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/cwsei/resources/instructor/Two-stage_Exams.pdf)

## 2.7 A course focused on participating in feedback and developing feedback literacy

Example from: PBEL3000 – two week intensive. At key points in the course, students reflect on feedback they have given or received and how they have used that feedback in other assessment as well as their interactions with student group members, staff and industry partners. These feedback reflections are one assessment component of the course.

## 2.8 Evaluative Judgement is the assessment task and the capability being assessed

Multiple examples in classes of various sizes. Provide students with a deliberately deficient artefact that they might come across in their professional lives beyond University. Students evaluate the quality of the artefact. In doing so, they are required to articulate which aspects of the artefact are wrong or under-developed, and explain and justify why this is the case. Are there any implications that arise from not correcting/improving the deficiencies? This part of the task could be guided to provide some parameters to work within. You might also ask for suggestions as to how the deficiencies could be rectified with another justification of their decisions for improvement.

Complete the Feedback Coversheet form and upload your Project A: Literature Review below.

Form MEdSt - Feedback coversheet Close Form

**FORM MEdSt - Feedback coversheet**

**NEW REQUIRED**  
Which area are you most confident about with this assignment?

**NEW REQUIRED**  
Which area of your assignment are you unsure of or did you find most challenging?

**NEW REQUIRED**  
What I would like your feedback on is... (list up to three specific areas):

Save

Feedback Coversheet in Chalk & Wire ePortfolio

### 3. Feedback Coversheets

There are many variations of feedback coversheets. Asking students what aspect of their work they would like feedback on is a way of creating dialogue between student and teacher, and encourages student participation in the feedback process. The question should prompt students to think about their work and to wonder about its quality. However, some studies have shown that students' limited understanding of staff expectations and standards limits their ability to initiate a meaningful dialogue with their teachers (Bloxham & Campbell, 2010). It is difficult for students to know what feedback they need, and some students may worry that they are pointing out "areas of weakness" in their work. A way to overcome these challenges is to combine the approaches in Section 1 with a feedback coversheet so that students develop a better understanding of expectations and get some practice at evaluative judgement.

**5 Individual submission**

Before you submit your report, please check the following:

- Your report includes your full name and student number
- You have indicated the location of the timber structure in your report

Upload your file here. Maximum one file.  
The following file types are allowed: .pdf Maximum file size is 1 GB

Select file to upload

Feel free to leave some feedback below.

Maximum marks: 5 [Check answer](#)

**6 Feedback**

This is the first time we have run a DIY lab and it would be great to hear your thoughts.

1. Was there anything you particularly liked about this assessment?
2. Were there any aspects of the assessment task that you struggled with?
3. Are there any aspects of the assessment task that you would particularly like feedback on?

Fill in your answer here

Thank you!

A variation suitable for two-part assessments is to include a space on the coversheet where students can articulate - *the previous feedback that I have used to strengthen this assignment is . . .* This encourages students to look back at previous feedback, seek understanding of what it means and try to apply it. If using Turnitin students could use the comments box to address the following questions:

- How have you incorporated learning/feedback from the previous assignment into this assignment?
- What do you feel you have learned from doing this assignment?
- What would you do differently if you were to do this assignment again?
- What specific aspects of this assignment would you like feedback on?

If you are going to use feedback coversheets, you should introduce them to students well in advance of the assessment due date, explain their utility and highlight the benefits.