

SECTION 12: PROVIDING FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS ON SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

12.1 Expectations for Providing Feedback

Feedback fulfils the principles of effective feedback

12.1.1 When providing feedback, staff should be mindful of the principles which make for effective feedback to students, namely:

Feedback on assessment feeds forward; it is regular, accessible, actionable and timely.

Students will receive feedback on every summative assessment task

12.1.2 Schools will provide feedback on each summative assessment task set during a course of study.

The expectation is that individual feedback is provided; however, there may be exceptions where group feedback is equally effective and appropriate. Any such exceptions will need the approval of the School Director of Teaching and Learning (SDTL).

12.1.3 All Schools must ensure that every student receives a minimum of one piece of feedback on a formative or summative assessment before the winter vacation (or equivalent for non-September starters) for each module taken during the first semester of their programme of study. The feedback should preferably be on an individual basis. This applies to Part 0, Part 1 and PGT students.

12.1.4 Schools should undertake to ensure that their students are adequately equipped to receive and engage with their feedback. Students should be made aware of the nature of feedback in their programme and expectations around their engagement with feedback.

12.1.5 Where modules span two semesters students should be given some feedback on their learning as early as practicable.

12.1.6 Schools may provide feedback on 'work in progress', according to local practice.

Feedback and marks will be given in a timely way and within 15 working days, in accordance with the University's turnaround requirement

12.1.7 All feedback should be provided to students within 15 working days of the submission deadline. This should help students engage with the feedback and allow them to implement any recommendations ahead of their next piece of work.

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- 12.1.8 Where it is not possible to deliver feedback within this timeframe (e.g. owing to staff illness) staff should communicate this to students promptly and with a clear indication of when feedback should be expected.
- 12.1.9 Full details of the 15 Day Turnaround Time requirements can be found in section 2 below.

Feedback on summative assessment will be provided via the most appropriate channels

- 12.1.10 Feedback should be meaningful, meet the University's requirements for inclusive practices, and persistent. Providing feedback via online tools helps to ensure that feedback meets these criteria. Guidance on the use of online tools for feedback can be found on the TEL support for staff page: <https://sites.reading.ac.uk/TEL-Support-Staff/>
- 12.1.11 The majority of the University's assessment is conducted via online platforms and staff are expected to provide feedback via these online platforms. Online is the University's default mode for the provision of feedback.
- 12.1.12 However, the University recognises that the nature and format of feedback will, in part, be determined by the format of the assessment (for instance, online feedback may not be appropriate for a performance or presentation). On occasion disciplinary authenticity will dictate that feedback is provided by some means other than the online tools available to staff.
- 12.1.13 Whilst online feedback is the primary mode for the delivery of feedback the University accepts that feedback can also usefully be provided orally, in seminars, via annotated papers and other means. Where feedback is provided by alternative modes the University encourages staff to also provide feedback via online tools (e.g. group feedback via Blackboard).
- 12.1.14 The University encourages staff to supplement online feedback with other modes of delivery and vice versa.

Students will have the opportunity to discuss their feedback

- 12.1.15 Feedback at the University reflects our ethos of working in partnership with students. Therefore, when students receive feedback, they should be encouraged to explore the feedback with others.
- 12.1.16 In most cases it will be sensible to discuss feedback with the most appropriate staff (e.g. Module Convenor) and staff should make themselves available for such discussions (e.g. through feedback discussions in seminars, one-to-one meetings, or office hours). Students should be encouraged to engage in discussions with staff about the feedback they have received.
- 12.1.17 Students should discuss the feedback they have received with their Academic Tutor, and Academic Tutors should be proactive in engaging with students about their feedback, supporting them to reflect holistically on their feedback, to identify patterns and recurrent issues, and to discuss how they can improve their work. For further information, please see the guidance on the [role of Academic Tutors in relation to feedback](#). Students may also wish to explore the feedback received with other relevant people, including , ASK (Academic Skills and Know-how) Advisers, Study Advice and their peers.

12.2 Feedback Turnaround Times

12.2.1 Across all undergraduate (including those with a Foundation Year) and postgraduate programmes, the standard turnaround time for feedback and marks on coursework (formative and summative) is a maximum of 15 working days from the deadline for submission (or date of the in-class test). This helps to ensure that feedback is timely. The amount and form of feedback should be determined by what is useful to the student: more feedback is not necessarily better feedback. Programme teams should also take into account where their resource is best used to ensure students get feedback at the time when it is most useful to them. It may be necessary, when teaching large cohorts, to provide reduced individualised feedback which is buttressed by more general feedback to the cohort. Equally, programme teams may make a strategic decision to direct resource to provide formative feed-forward in preference to detailed feedback on summative work; in such a case, it is important that the rationale for the practice is carefully explained to the students.

12.2.2 Feedback turnaround times are calculated by working days. In consequence, feedback delivered to students at overseas campuses may be impacted by local holidays (as they affect markers). The working days are counted according to the locality of delivery. If marking and moderation is occurring on different campuses differences should be considered in order to ensure that feedback is returned within the 15 working days of submission at the location of submission.

12.2.3 Some assessments may be exempt from the requirement that feedback be returned within 15 working days. However, feedback should be returned in a timely fashion in order to ensure its currency and usefulness. Where there is an exemption staff should communicate to students an expected timeframe for delivery of feedback.

12.2.4 The following assessments are exempt, subject to the proviso that work submitted in Semester 2 of the Final Part should be returned prior to graduation:

- i. Dissertations (please note that work ancillary to dissertations, eg data collection, dissertation proposals are not exempted from the 15 working day requirement);
- ii. Final year projects (normally 40 credits in weight);
- iii. Assessments where there is input from a professional external body which might unavoidably delay the marking process;
- iv. Assessments where, for logistical reasons, there are staggered submission dates (eg practicals); and
- v. Occurrences of modules delivered at partner institutions.

12.2.5 The following would **not** normally be considered as valid reasons for exemptions:

- i. Large cohorts (marking loads);
 - ii. Working being marked by sessional staff; and
 - iii. Laboratory work.
- In respect of large pieces of work falling under the automatic exemption from the 15 working day policy (ie under 2.4(ii) above), the University does not prescribe an alternative deadline. Deadlines for such pieces of work should be agreed between the module convenor and the SDTL and confirmed with the Teaching and Learning

Dean (TLD.) In all cases these should be agreed before the commencement of the module, and the alternative deadline conveyed to students before the hand-in date (it may be useful to also communicate the alternative deadline at the date marking what would have been the 15 working day turnaround deadline).

- If an exemption under 2.4(iii) above applies, the SDTL and Module Convenor should consult with the professional external body concerned to determine a reasonable timeframe for the delivery of feedback. This alternative deadline should be confirmed with the TLD. The alternative should be conveyed to students on the module, ideally before the hand-in date (it may be useful also to communicate the alternative deadline at the date marking what would have been the 15 working day turnaround deadline).
- In all cases where an exemption applies, students should be informed of the date by which they will receive feedback (the alternative date for the return of feedback should ideally be communicated before the hand-in date and it may be useful to remind students of the alternative date at the date marking what would have been the 15 working day turnaround deadline). Staff are reminded that feedback should be on time and that lengthy delays in returning feedback should be avoided.
- In the case of exemptions occurring under 2.4 alternative dates for the return of feedback (or timeframe for delivery of feedback) should be noted in the Module Description.

12.2.6 In respect of other module assessment types, SDTLs may submit a formal request (in writing) for an exemption to the relevant TLD. Exemptions will be granted for sound pedagogic reasons only. Requests for an exemption should be made prior to the commencement of the academic year (and prior to the commencement of the module). Unless notified otherwise, such granted exemptions are for one academic year only.

12.2.7 TLDs will monitor the requests they receive, and a record of agreed exemptions will be maintained in order to ensure institutional oversight, consistency of approach and equality for students as well reviewing practice in order to promote enhancement and mitigate any negative effects the turnaround time might inadvertently cause.

12.2.8 There may be instances where the requirement for the 15 working day turnaround time for feedback does not apply on an individual level. For instance, where a student's submission is being investigated for academic misconduct, the requirement to provide feedback within 15 working days will not apply for that student. However, the return of marks and feedback for a cohort should not be delayed by the withholding of an individual's marks and feedback (where their work is pending an academic misconduct investigations). See also 2.19 below.

12.2.9 The 15 working day turnaround time requirement does not apply to generic feedback on written examinations (see section 3 below). Such feedback is subject to its own deadlines, as noted in 3.6. since students cannot view this feedback until examinations marks are released.

12.2.10 Where a Mark Entry Deadline occurs before the 15 working days, the mark entry deadline will take precedence, whether or not there is an exemption for returning marks and feedback to students.

Monitoring and compliance with the 15 working day turnaround time

- 12.2.11 Schools, in conjunction with Support Centres, maintain data on compliance with the turnaround time requirement and, in cases where feedback was returned late, the number of days delay. In most instances this process will be automated via RISIS.
- 12.2.12 The Sub-Committee for the Delivery and Enhancement of Learning and Teaching monitors compliance on at least an annual basis. Schools are encouraged to undertake their own monitoring of 15 working day turnaround times in order to identify areas where staff are facing particular challenges and may require additional support.
- 12.2.13 Where the 15 working day turnaround time for feedback will not be met (which should only be in unforeseen circumstances beyond a School's control), students should be informed of the issues and advised as to when to expect their work to be returned. Clear, timely and open communication is essential.

Moderation and administration time

- 12.2.14 Where possible, internal moderation (as opposed to full second marking) of coursework and in-class tests should take place within the 15 working day period.
- 12.2.15 However, the University recognises that there may be instances where this may not be practicable. If the School identifies circumstances where it is unable to complete moderation within the 15 working day period, it may return work to students unmoderated. However, in such cases students should be informed that marks given are subject to moderation and are provisional until work has been moderated. Additionally, students should be informed of the date by which marks will have been moderated.
- 12.2.16 Schools should use moderation as an opportunity to perform additional quality assurance checks on feedback provided in order to ensure that it meets the University's and School's expectations of feedback. Where moderators have any concerns about the potential effectiveness of feedback provided they should highlight this to their SDTL. Equally, where moderators identify good practice this should also be highlighted to the SDTL. Comments and marks are both subject to moderation. It is good practice to establish, early in the marking, a shared understanding of what good feedback looks like and how it will be provided in order to ensure consistency. The [Reflecting on Practice with Colleagues](#) process provides opportunities to share constructive feedback on feedback practices.
- 12.2.17 Schools must ensure that working practices, particularly in relation to administration of assessment and the return of feedback, will enable adherence to the 15 working day turnaround for feedback. Processes for recording the hand-in, distribution and marking of coursework must be factored into calculations for the delivery of feedback within 15 working days.

Work submitted late

- 12.2.18 Any coursework which is granted an extended deadline through the Exceptional Circumstances process, or an amended deadline as a result of a verified systems outage which impacts the ability of students to submit summative work, will normally be given feedback and marks within a 15 working day period to run from the amended deadline for submission. The student(s) should be advised of the amended date for feedback as soon

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as reasonably possible. When determining a revised date for the return of feedback, staff should be mindful of the requirement for feedback to be timely.

- If the granting of an extension would impact the release of feedback to the entire cohort, then an alternative assessment should be set.

12.2.19 Any coursework which is submitted late and without an authorised extension, or is submitted later than any granted extension, shall not fall within the requirements for feedback and marks to be provided within 15 working days. The deadline which will apply in such cases shall be agreed by the module convenor and the SDTL. The student(s) should be advised of the amended date for feedback as soon as reasonably possible. When determining a revised date for the return of feedback staff should be mindful of the requirement for feedback to be timely.

Academic Misconduct

12.2.20 In cases where a student's submission is being investigated under the [Academic Misconduct guidelines](#) the 15 working day turnaround for feedback period is deferred whilst an investigation is conducted. Wherever possible this should not delay the timely return of feedback and marks to the remainder of the cohort. For the individual student whose work is under investigation feedback and marks should be provided (as appropriate in light of the findings of the investigation) as soon as practicably possible.

12.3 Generic feedback on written examinations

12.3.1 Generic feedback on the examination performance of a whole module cohort must be made available to students (except in the case of multiple-choice assessments, resits, and cohorts of five or fewer students). This feedback will not make reference to any individual student or individual student's performance, or include any reference which would allow any individual to be identified. Generic feedback on examinations may be used for general quality assurance purposes within Schools.

12.3.2 Generic feedback may be provided at the level of the individual question (for example – an essay question, a mathematical problem, or a suite of shorter questions on one topic) or at the level of the whole examination. SDTLs and/or School/Departmental Assessment Leads are responsible for choosing which level is most appropriate for each examination (with a view to providing consistency in approach across a programme), although this responsibility may be delegated to module convenors.

12.3.3 Feedback will be reported according to a standard template, to ensure consistency across modules and Schools. To this end, institution-wide question-level and examination-level feedback proformas will be stored centrally and provided to Schools by Support Centres.

12.3.4 Responsibility for the implementation of Section 3 of this Policy across each School rests with the SDTL and the School/Department Assessment Leads). Module convenors are responsible for ensuring that feedback for their modules is gathered (in the case of examinations with multiple markers) and submitted to Support Centres (see 3.5 below). Support Centres are not expected to 'chase' markers to submit feedback.

12.3.5 Responsibility for the operational aspects of feedback provision rests with the Support Centres. Support Centres will issue feedback proformas to Schools before the start of the examination period or, for examinations held outside the normal period,

suitably in advance of the relevant sitting. Schools will return completed feedback forms to Support Centres by the date on which marks for the relevant examinations must be uploaded to RISIS.

- 12.3.6 Support Centres will upload each feedback form to the relevant Module area on Blackboard. Where necessary, forms will be accompanied by the corresponding question papers. These documents will be visible immediately to relevant members of University staff but hidden from students until examination marks are released.
- 12.3.7 Feedback on Blackboard will be made visible to students, by Support Centres, at the same time as, or shortly after, the corresponding examination marks are released.
- 12.3.8 For the benefit of students who enrol on a module in subsequent years, Support Centres will make feedback forms available to the following year's iteration of the module on Blackboard, up to a maximum of four years.
- 12.3.9 Generic examinations feedback will not normally be considered relevant to a challenge to marks awarded or to the grounds for an appeal.

12.4 Individual feedback on, and access to, scripts for written examinations

- 12.4.1 While generic feedback on the examination performance of a whole cohort must be made available (see section 3 above) to students, Schools must also ensure that, if sought, feedback on individual performance in written examinations is available to students. The School is responsible for determining the nature and extent of feedback which is appropriate to the circumstance. However, Schools should note that students who are resitting a module are entitled to guidance on their performance in the written examination for the relevant module. Such feedback should identify the strengths and weaknesses of their performance and indicate how they might improve their performance.
- 12.4.2 A student would not normally have an entitlement to have access to their examination scripts. A module convenor or appropriate member of academic staff may permit a student sight of their script in order to discuss examination performance. Access to physical scripts should be supervised, and under no circumstances should a student be permitted to remove the script from the School. The script can be used as a catalyst for a more nuanced and developed conversation about performance, noting that the comments on scripts are not feedback per se but guides for markers and moderators.
- 12.4.3 A student may request, in line with their Data Access Rights under the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018, access to an Examiner's comments on their examination answers, whether those comments are held on the script or elsewhere. In such a case, a student should submit a written application to the Data Protection Office (IMPS). Markers must ensure that any comments about examination answers are appropriate, fair and relate to the answer and not to the candidate. It is recognised that, where markers provide comments on examination answers, the purpose of the comments is to indicate for the Internal and External Examiners the rationale for the marking and not to provide feedback to students.
- 12.4.4 Schools will be responsible for making reasonable provision to enable Examiners or the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results to have access to marked scripts for examinations which contribute to classification.

12.4.5 Schools should note that the above provisions also apply to examinations administered online and that the level of feedback provided on examinations conducted online should be no different to that provided on a 'traditional' examinations script.

12.5 Feedback on in-class tests

12.5.1 All in-class tests are subject to the 15 working day turnaround time feedback policy. However, a distinction is made in respect of access to scripts (or the alternative for online tests) between in-class tests which serve a primarily summative purpose, similar to a centrally-administered examination, and in-class tests which serve a primarily formative purpose, supporting students' learning and providing supportive, structured, individualised feedback.

- Schools must ensure that students receive individual feedback and marks for primarily summative in-class tests within 15 working days from the date of the in-class test. However, a student would not normally have an entitlement to have access to their scripts for primarily summative in-class tests. In such cases access to scripts should be governed by the same principles outlined in 4.2 above.
- In the case of primarily formative in-class tests, marked scripts and accompanying feedback should be returned to students.

12.5.2 Schools will be responsible for making reasonable provision to enable Examiners or the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results to have access to marked scripts for in-class tests which contribute to classification.

12.6 Supporting staff

12.6.1 Colleagues across the institution can provide support and insights to help develop feedback practices. Colleagues within your School can provide support and guidance and line managers should be consulted if there are any difficulties in adhering to this policy (especially with regards meeting the requirement to deliver feedback within 15 working days). Colleagues in the Technology Enhanced Learning Team can provide guidance on using Blackboard and Turnitin for providing feedback and colleagues in the Academic Development and Enhancement Team can help you review practice in your School.

12.6.2 [A suite of online resources](#) is available to support staff in relation to assessment and feedback, which may be supplemented by this [additional material](#):

[Resources for Assessment and Feedback](#)

[Guidance on Assessment and Feedback](#)

Support and advice for Schools is available from the Academic Development and Enhancement team in the Centre for Quality Support and Development (CQSD) on managing the provision of feedback for large cohorts to maximise student learning while maintaining reasonable workloads for staff.

Employing PhD students to provide feedback

12.6.3 PhD students may be employed as part of a team providing feedback to students with the proviso that they are appropriately trained and supported in this work. Training will normally include calibration exercises with an experienced marker.

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12.6.4 Module Convenors remain responsible for overseeing marking and quality of feedback for their modules and should support PhD students in meeting the required standards.

Team Marking

12.6.5 Where team marking is used, the module convenor is responsible for ensuring consistency of the marking within 15 working days of the deadline for submission/date of the in-class test and therefore feedback is returned in line with the 15 working day principles outlined above (see section 3).

12.7 Supporting Students

12.7.1 If students believe that feedback does not meet the expectations in this policy, they should contact the School Director of Teaching and Learning. Students may also raise concerns via the Student-Staff Partnership Group or the Board of Studies and Student Experience.

12.7.2 Online resources to support students with electronic submission, assessment and feedback via Blackboard and Turnitin can be found on the TEL Support site for Students <https://sites.reading.ac.uk/tel-support-students/> and the Essentials page Online Assessment and Feedback – <https://www.reading.ac.uk/essentials/Study/Study-spaces-and-support/Online-Assessment-and-Feedback>.

12.7.3 Resources to support students to better understand the feedback they receive and how to make the most of it can be found [here](#).

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