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Policy on Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students

The University of Manchester is committed to providing timely and appropriate feedback to students on their academic progress and achievement, thereby enabling students to reflect on their progress and plan their academic and skills development effectively. Feedback, and acting on feedback, is therefore part of the active learning process throughout a student's course of study.

Methods of feedback will vary according to assessment type, discipline, level of study and the needs of the individual student.

This policy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision. It sets out the principles under which feedback should be planned and delivered and relates to both formative and summative work. A glossary of terms can be found as Appendix 1 of this document.

Principles

1   Feedback must be provided in a timely manner that helps students understand

    (i) the marks or grades they have received for the work submitted, and

    (ii) how their performance might be improved in future.

2   Feedback must be as personal as possible to the individual student to enable reflection on individual skills and performance.

3.   Students have a responsibility to consider feedback given on their work, to seek to understand it, and to act on it.

Policies relating to the operational delivery of feedback to students

Communicating the feedback process

4   Unit teachers are responsible for providing programme directors, or equivalent, with details of how feedback will be provided on their unit. The feedback mechanisms adopted should be capable of review by external examiners, processes for peer review and periodic review.

5   At the start of each academic year students should be informed of the feedback opportunities available in that year and the main goals of feedback at that stage in their studies. Information must be provided in programme handbooks, unit outlines and course materials to inform students of the mechanisms by which they will receive feedback and the forms it will take for both formative and, where appropriate, summative work. The Blackboard page for each unit should have a clear section explaining the feedback mechanism that the unit will follow. At the start of each unit, the unit teacher(s) should explain how and when feedback will be provided during the unit.

6   An opportunity must exist in all units for formative feedback.

7   It is a key duty of Academic Advisors that they reinforce the feedback mechanisms that exist on a programme and allow the opportunity for students to clarify their understanding of the purpose of feedback.

Grading as a part of feedback

8   Students should be given clear information on the assessment process and the grading criteria applied to each assessment. Grade descriptors used should be consistent across the units in a given programme and should be readily accessible to students in unit and programme handbooks or equivalent. Assignment of a grade is an important aspect of feedback and should be provided wherever possible. Schools should also expedite the adoption of a common set of grade descriptors across all programmes in a manner to be informed by the forthcoming review of degree regulations and assessment policies.

Timescales for the delivery of feedback to students

9   Feedback must be timely and students must be made aware of the timetable for submission deadlines and dates on which feedback will be returned for each unit.

10   For all formative assessments and assessed coursework, feedback will normally be provided within 15 working days after the final submission deadline or exceptionally, and subject to prior approval by the faculty, within 20 working days after the final submission deadline; extensions to 20 working days will be approved on academic grounds only and must be clearly communicated to students in advance.

For single pieces of assessed work carrying a credit weighting of 30 credits or more, the maximum time for feedback to be given is normally 30 working days after the final submission deadline.

In cases where these requirements would extend beyond the end of a taught programme then paragraphs 16 and 17 will apply.

11   Schools should have a clear policy to handle feedback on late submissions.

Delivery of feedback to students

12   Opportunities must be provided for students to discuss feedback in person or virtually, as appropriate, with the unit teacher/s.

13   Pursuant to principle 1, comments should be made on why students were awarded the given mark and how they can improve their work, including any recommendations for further reading where appropriate.

14   Constructive criticism should be the overriding feedback style.

15   Opportunities for feedback should be comparable in scope and scale between students and between units that are similar in style or structure.

Feedback on examinations

16   Schools must facilitate individual student requests to have access to their own exam scripts and/or coursework (or copies of these), apart from multiple choice questions (MCQs). This applies to both exams/coursework submitted online or as hard copy, and access must be provided without charge. This could be achieved by a variety of methods including providing physical access for students to see their marked exam script on campus, if practicable; making a scanned copy of paper exam scripts available by electronic means; or by allowing students to access their grades and feedback through Blackboard. Students are not permitted to remove original exam scripts from campus.

17   Markers/course unit leads are encouraged to ensure that general feedback on performance in assessments (particularly MCQs) is made available to students.

18   Staff should inform students that copyright of all exam questions/papers is owned by the University and that, in accordance with the University's copyright policy, any sharing of the materials without permission is prohibited and, if students are found to be in breach, they may be subject to disciplinary action

19   Written comments should be provided for all exam scripts and coursework and must be clear and legible. These comments may be provided in a separate document but should enable students to understand to which part of their work comments refer. Students should have the opportunity, within reason, to seek clarification and further feedback; however students are reminded that there can be no appeals concerning matters of academic judgement.

Further guidance on how these principles might be implemented by Schools can be found in Appendix 2 of this document. It is recommended that the provision of feedback opportunities should form part of both vertical and horizontal curriculum and assessment planning to ensure that there is consistency of approach across the programme.

> Appendix 1 - Glossary of terms used in the Policy on Feedback to Students (/tlso/policy-guidance/assessment/practice-of-assessment/feedback-to-students/glossary/#d.en.587586)

> Appendix 2 - Guidance to support the implementation of the Policy on Feedback to Students (/tlso/policy-guidance/assessment/practice-of-assessment/feedback-to-students/guidance/#d.en.587587)

For a full copy of the Policy on Feedback to Students, please see below:-

> Full Policy on Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students (http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=6518) (PDF document)

Updates to paragraphs 12 and 16-19 were approved by Senate, 4 December 2020

Contact TLSD - ADP

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In our continuous effort to improve our site, we look forward to hearing your thoughts, questions and feedback

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