

## Policy of Academic Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students

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Imperial College London is committed to providing timely and appropriate feedback to students on their academic progress and achievement, thereby enabling students to reflect on their academic progress. Feedback, and acting on feedback, is part of the active learning process throughout a student's programme of study.

Methods of feedback will vary according to assessment type, discipline, level of study and the needs of the individual student. The feedback method should be considered at the time the assessment is set and students should be told how the feedback will be provided to them.

This policy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision. It sets out the principles under which feedback should be delivered. It relates primarily to summative assessment, though thought should also be given to the provision of feedback for formative assessment and how feedback will be provided for end of year examinations and large pieces of coursework such as projects.

Depending on the subject being studied, feedback may include:

- Individual written comments;
- Whole class feedback in lectures, seminars, and tutorials (e.g. discussion of common errors; sample/model answers) or by written comments;
- Oral feedback in laboratories or while on placement (e.g. in clinical situations);
- Electronic feedback on IT-based tests and quizzes;
- Peer feedback as part of an assessment task;
- On-going conversations in meetings with Personal Tutors, lecturers, programme directors, etc.

The EDU provide a number of workshops and training opportunities related to providing effective feedback, see <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/educational-development/workshops/>.

For further information on feedback see the QAA's publication "Understanding Assessment" <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/understanding-assessment.pdf> or visit the Higher Education Academy (HEA) website and search for "academic feedback": <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/about-hea>.

### Principles

1. Academic Feedback must be provided in a timely manner that helps students understand (i) the marks they have received for the work submitted and (ii) how their performance might be improved in the future.
2. Academic Feedback should enable individual students to reflect on their individual skills and performance.
3. Students must be informed about what form the feedback will take and when they will receive feedback.

4. 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**

5. At the start of each academic year students should be informed of the academic feedback opportunities available in that year. Information should be provided in programme handbooks and other appropriate programme materials to inform students of the mechanisms by which they will receive feedback and the forms it will take. Where the turnaround time for the return of academic feedback falls in a vacation period, students should be advised how they can access feedback, particularly where the feedback would help students to prepare for a later assessment.
6. Students should be given clear information on the assessment process and the marking criteria applied to each assessment. The marking scheme should be consistent across the modules in a programme and should be accessible to students.
7. Students should be made aware of the opportunities they have to seek clarification on the feedback they have received.
8. The release of provisional marks for the assessment is permitted in circumstances. Where provisional marks are released, students should be advised that the marks are provisional until confirmed by the Board of Examiners. For further details see the [“Guidelines for Issuing Provisional Marks to Students on Taught Programmes”](#).

### **Timescales for the delivery of feedback**

9. Feedback should be given in time to inform subsequent and related assessments. Departments/programmes should publish deadlines (date and time) for the submission of all assessments at the beginning of each term. Alongside this departments/programmes should also publish the dates on which feedback will be returned. In accordance with the [Guidelines for Issuing Provisional Marks to Students on Taught Programmes](#), it should also be made clear to students which pieces of assessment (if any) they can expect to receive their provisional marks. Delays to the return of feedback must be clearly communicated to students as soon as possible with a revised date for the provision of the feedback.
10. The College has for several years promoted 10 working days as the best practice timescale for the return of feedback. However, it is recognised that quality of feedback should not be compromised in order to adhere to this timescale. In order to promote consistency of experience for students, departments should publicise their expected timescale norms for the return of feedback, this may include differing timescales for differing types of assessment (e.g. coursework within 10 working days, feedback for examinations within 20 working days). In setting departmental norms consideration should be given to workload that ensure that strategies adopted to provide feedback are sustainable and support the student experience.
11. Departments/programmes should mark and give feedback on student work submitted up to one (1) day after the published assessment deadline. Work submitted later than one (1) day after the published assessment deadline will be marked and feedback given, only where, in the opinion of the department, it has been submitted

within a reasonable time period and where it would be educationally helpful to do so. In the case of late submission, feedback might need to be provided in an alternative format and at a date outside of the published schedule.

12. Departments should determine how best to provide feedback to students on their performance in examinations and other pieces of summative assessment, e.g. undergraduate projects or postgraduate dissertations, which are taken towards the end of the academic year. Students must still be informed in advance of the arrangements for the provision of feedback on these assessments.
13. Departments should provide appropriate and relevant staff development opportunities in this area (for example, by encouraging staff to attend the EDU training and/or apply for Fellowship of the HEA). Departments should also encourage the sharing of good practice between their programmes and within and outside their Faculty.
14. Departments must also design and review programme curricula which considers the volume and nature of assessment together with enhanced feedback arrangements.
15. Departmental arrangements for the provision of feedback should be overseen by the Faculty Education Committee. This may be carried out via the consideration of Annual Monitoring Reports, student surveys and action plans (e.g. NSS, SOLE, PTES) and other evidence.

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