Assessment Issues 5 – Feedback to Students on Assessment			
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of the Guidance

Assessment of students' learning is a key issue for students, those who teach and those who are responsible for the design, accreditation, quality assurance and review of modules.

Faculties and Departments will understand the importance of ensuring effective systems are in place both to safeguard the integrity of the assessment and examination process and to ensure the maintenance and enhancement of quality standards. The same expectation will be found in the codes and processes developed by the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and by validating or professional bodies.

To safeguard and maintain the integrity of the assessment and examination process, and to ensure the maintenance and enhancement of quality standards, Faculties and Departments are required to ensure that all assessments and examinations meet a set minimum requirement and conform to BUE Regulations as set out in the University's Examination and Assessment Regulations.

The Assessment Guidance applies a minimum standard for assessments and examinations that all Faculties/Departments should adopt in relation to three key areas:

a. design of assessments and examination papers;
b. marking;
c. the scrutiny of final marks.

The Assessment Guidance has been developed as a result of the consolidation of good practice within the University since its foundation including recommendations from different working groups, and in particular the 2012 working group on Academic Honesty. Furthermore, the Assessment Guidance is based on best UK practice and reflect UK policy and norms as set out by the QAA, The HE Academy as well as a number of UK universities from which the Guidelines have been derived.*

See Appendix for a full list of sources from which the Assessment Guidelines have been derived.

2   FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS ON ASSESSMENT

2.1 What is feedback?

The key to assessment is feedback. Feedback could be defined as any type of communication via a variety of mechanisms or types, of any size or format, that gives information on the quality or standard that a piece of work has reached. It is usually between the tutor and student, but is not restricted to this, and could be between peers or colleagues.

2.2 Why is feedback important?

Assessment and feedback are key processes in the relationship between the tutor and the student. Feedback is also important in terms of determining the authenticity with respect to student's work, and thus avoiding plagiarism or cheating. Feedback shows that the tutor cares. It shows students that they mean something to the tutor and that you understand their situation.

If, through the feedback of their work, tutors enable students to feel more appreciated for the effort they put in, then it is more than likely that students will continue to put in at least as much effort for future work. A sense of belonging on the part of the student, a humanising of the relationship between the tutor and the student, should serve to enhance the effort they put in, and the way they use the feedback provided. Feedback then becomes more than just a grade, a pass or fail, it becomes a means by which improvements can be made, and personalising that ensures that the feedback is actually used to feed forward to their next piece of work.

Feedback is also important as an iterative tool by which students improve their work before their next submission – described by some as _feeding forward_. Feedback to students is the means by which they can develop and progress their work to achieve better marks. As such, it is crucial that they receive feedback well before the next assignment deadline.

2.3 General principles - Promoting student engagement with feedback

Type of feedback

The type of feedback provided must reflect the feedback strategy that is outlined in the Module Specification.

Student engagement

Programme teams are required to develop teaching and learning strategies to develop students' engagement with the feedback process. These may involve:

a.   Selecting, prioritising and focusing on key development issues.
b.   Providing feedback both on the assessment product and the process.
c.   Writing feedback to include a set of questions that students need to respond to.

d. Requiring redrafting or resubmission of work.

e. Requiring peer discussion of issues raised in feedback.

f. Use of eLearning.

g. Use of group feedback in addition to individual feedback.

h. Use of appointments with individuals or groups of students via Office Hours.

i. Use of staff development sessions, or working groups, to share and develop good practice.

Quality of feedback

Feedback provided must:

a. Address the specific needs of each student. Students must receive individual feedback on their assessed work as well as generic feedback as appropriate.

b. Feedback, particularly written feedback must be in a positive form and build on student's strengths.

c. Promote students' engagement with it.

Timeliness – Feed Forward

Feedback must be provided within 15 working days of the deadline for submission. Feedback must be provided to students so that this can inform their future development and preparation for submission of future assignments.

2.4 Requirements for Feedback

Programme teams must ensure they have a defined strategy for providing effective feedback to students in a timely manner. A key part of this strategy, and a minimum University requirement, is the provision of Feedback using the approved University's Coursework Feedback Form. Programme teams should ensure:

a. Assignments are marked and feedback given to students in the form of general comments marked on the Coursework Feedback Form. Specific feedback shall be provided on the coursework, where appropriate. Students' marks shall be recorded on a mark spreadsheet for the module, and are provisional until confirmed by the Module Examination Board.

2.5 University Feedback Form

This is included in Appendix 1.

The structure of the Coursework Feedback Form provides for feedback that shall promote learning, improve understanding and encourage critical self-reflection.

Additional feedback mechanisms may be used to give specific, detailed feedback to individuals (e.g. by use of a special feedback form for particular assignments) or to give general feedback to classes.

2.6 Using the Coursework Feedback Form

Completion of the Form

The form is available on the BUE Website. The member of staff responsible for the coursework assessment must complete all sections of the form.

Grades

Tutors may enter a provisional grade, but not the actual mark. Tutors must ensure that students understand that the grade is provisional and is subject to review by the Subject Advisor and External Examiner and may be reduced or increased before final approval by the Programme Examination Board.

Focus of the feedback

Tutors should provide specific feedback and guidance to students on (a) aspects that were effective, (b) aspects that require further development, and (c) advice on how the student can improve their work.

Timescales and record keeping

A completed copy of the form should be returned to the student normally within 15 working days of the deadline for submission, or of the actual date of submission, whichever is the later. A copy of the form should be kept by the Module Leader and Department.

2.7 How can I improve students' learning from feedback?

Effective feedback on learning is a key means to raise student achievement. It is linked to the idea that feedback provided at the right time can help 'form' students' future work. Feedback helps students see where they are getting it right and where they have gone wrong so they can do something about it.

Types of feedback include, but may not be limited to:

   a. individual oral or written feedback
   b. group oral or written feedback
   c. individualised comments
   d. model answers
   e. detailed assessment guidance
   f. generic feedback

Programme teams should identity appropriate strategies to ensure effective feedback is provided. Suggested strategies are listed in Checklist 1 although these are not exhaustive.

Checklist 1: Feedback strategies

Speedy return of work
✓ Students benefit from a very prompt return of marked assignments with accompanying feedback.
✓ Where there are two or more elements of assessment in a module, students should receive feedback on the first assignment in time to apply it to subsequent assessed work.
✓ If large cohort numbers make this difficult, consider summarising common strengths and shortcomings and publishing these with formative recommendations on a notice board or on e-learning.

Use feedback grids
✓ Feedback grids can also speed up the provision of feedback, especially when they are tailored to the assignment.
✓ Where a marking scheme exists, this can be also be used as a marking grid, with tutors highlighting the cells to reflect student achievement.

Group feedback – via email
✓ A useful way to provide prompt feedback when handwriting feedback comments or marking exam scripts is to keep a note of general strengths and weaknesses. This group feedback is then word processed and emailed to the students typically as one page of very prompt generalised feedback which avoids the delay caused by second marking and moderation. This summary document can also be used as guidance for future cohorts.

Group feedback in class
✓ Give an overview of a set of assignments quickly. To do this, give yourself a set amount of time to briefly look at all the assignments from one group. Write some brief notes as you go through them on the general quality of the work handed in - 3-4 paragraphs - then distribute this to your students within two weeks of hand in. This can also be sent via eLearning or email for example.

Use of tutorials
✓ Tutorials - if and when you carry out these, make them take notes as well so that they have a written record of any feedback you gave.

Word-processing of feedback
✓ Word-processing of feedback means that it is easy to read and comments can be emailed to students.
✓ It also allows the use of comment banks which may speed up the writing of feedback. They can create the core of effective feedback quickly and thus allow more time for individualised comment.

Use of eLearning
✓ Run a discussion board or forum on eLearning that is dedicated to assignments and to feedback from them - P2P and student/tutor feedback as required.
✓ Provide generic feedback on eLearning.

Use of exemplars
✓ Use of exemplars - read good ones to the class, share good ones or parts of them with the class or with targeted students whose work would benefit from seeing how others do it. This can also be done on a peer to peer basis in a more informal way using a buddy system to engage lower ability students with those that can help them with their work.

Peer to Peer
✓ Peer to Peer (P2P) work and feedback - set a short essay, get students to mark each other's (if necessary to set criteria) then get them to feedback to their marking partner, and also as a whole group to each other, on the exercise itself.
Feedback should be specific and structured
✓ Feedback needs to provide specific with sufficient comment and suggestions on strengths, areas for development and strategies for improvement.   ✓ Negative and over-general feedback is unhelpful.   ✓ Structure of feedback: *You have done ………………..*   *You have not done …………..*   *You need to do ………………..*
Feedback should allow students to think about future assignments
✓ A key principle of feedback is that it will usefully inform the student of ways to improve their performance.   ✓ General praise is not useful but if comments are too grounded in the specific assignment, then students may find it difficult to generalise from them for future assignments.
Limit the amount of feedback
✓ It is important not to overload the student with too much detailed information and not to over-correct written work. These issues are also important from a tutor workload perspective.   ✓ The tutor should perhaps consider writing just three or four comments that would be most helpful to the student in understanding the grade awarded and in improving their future work.
Feedback should build on strengths
✓ In order to achieve an encouraging overall impact, at least part of the feedback should build on a positive aspect of the assessed work.
Feedback on English language
✓ Detailed corrections such as those for spelling and grammar could be limited to the first paragraphs with a note directing the writer to the problem and potential sources of help.
Feedback language
✓ Care should be taken to align the language of feedback to the mark, avoiding mismatches such as '65%, excellent'.

Adapted from: Assessment: A Guide for Lecturers, George Brown, Generic Centre, Learning and Teaching Support Network and Alison Hramiak, The Busy teacher educator's guide to developing assessment feedback, Sheffield Hallam University

3   APPENDIX 1: UNIVERSITY FEEDBACK FORM

British University in Egypt
Coursework Feedback Form

The member of staff responsible for the coursework assessment must complete all sections below and return a completed copy to the student normally within 15 working days of the deadline for submission, or of the actual date of submission, whichever is the later.

SECTION A: STUDENT'S DETAILS
To be completed by the tutor

Family name:	
Given name:	Student ID:
Module code:	
Module title:	
Group:	Tutor:

SECTION B: ASSESSMENT DETAILS
To be completed by the tutor

Assessment title:		
Signature:	Date:	*Provisional grade:

This grade is subject to review by the Subject Advisor and External Examiner and may be reduced or increased before final approval by the Programme Examination Board.

SECTION C: FEEDBACK
To be completed by the tutor

Specific aspects of your work that were effective:

Specific aspects of your work that need more work:

Specific advice on how to improve your work:

4   APPENDIX 2: KEY REFERENCES

The Assessment Guidance has been derived from a number of sources.

plagiarismadvice.org
http://www.plagiarismadvice.org/

Plagiarism, A Good Practice Guide, By Jude Carroll and Jon Appleton, May 2001
http://www.plagiarismadvice.org/resources/good-practice-guide

QAA
The UK Quality Code for Higher Education: A brief guide
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/default.aspx

The Higher Education Academy
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/home

Supporting academic integrity: Approaches and resources for higher education
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/academicintegrity/SupportingAcademicIntegrity_v2.pdf

Policy works
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/academicintegrity/policy_works.pdf

An Introduction to Assessment, The Higher Education Academy HE in FE: Teaching and Learning, Written and prepared by Gary Hargreaves EIAT, Consultancy Ltd, December 2006
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/subjects/engineering/intro-to-assessment.pdf

Assessment: A Guide for Lecturers, George Brown, Generic Centre, Learning and Teaching Support Network
http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/ftp/Resources/gc/assess03Lecturers.pdf

Designing assessment to improve Physical Sciences learning, Phil Race, March 2009
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/ps/documents/practice_guides/practice_guides/ps0069_designing_assessment_to_improve_physical_sciences_learning_march_2009.pdf

University of Bath
http://www.bath.ac.uk/

Student Disability Advice
http://www.bath.ac.uk/disabilityadvice/index.html

University of Ulster
http://www.ulster.ac.uk/

Assessment Criteria - Appendix 2 and 3
http://www.ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/download/Handbooks/Assessment%20Handbook.pdf

Oxford Brookes University – Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange (ASKe)
http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/index.html

Reduce the risk of Plagiarism in just 30 mins!

http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/documents/2576_123-ReducePlag.pdf

Using Turnitin to provide powerful formative feedback
http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/documents/2700_123-Turnitin.pdf

Sheffield Hallam University
The Busy teacher educator's guide to developing assessment feedback, Alison Hramiak