Course Principle 4: Effective teaching and feedback covers a range of reflective questions that can help develop feedback that empowers students to improve their work actively and iteratively.

Accessible and inclusive feedback should be **useful and timely** and be provided early enough to for students to self-correct and improve in time for their next assessment. Feedback should be **clearly linked** to all the assessment criteria/learning outcomes.

Feedback needs to be formative, useful, regular, rich, relevant and recognised as a learning activity in which, and with which, students need to actively engage. It should be part of continuous student learning and integrated into teaching, assessment, and academic advising activities. It needs to be useful and is not just a "gift wrapped package" of information delivered as an entitlement after the work has been done and the module has ended.

Good feedback practice is broadly defined here as anything that might strengthen the students' capacity to self-regulate their own performance. A synthesis of the research literature led to the following seven principles of good feedback practice.

Good feedback:

1. helps clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, expected standards)
2. facilitates the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning
3. delivers high quality information to students about their learning
4. encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning
5. encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem
6. provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance
7. provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape teaching.

(Nichol and MacFarlane - Dick 2006).

Royce Sadler's classic guidance (Sadler (1989) Instructional Science 18 119-144) states that:
There are **3** conditions for all students to benefit from feedback. The student should know:
1. What good performance is (i.e. a concept of the goal or standard aimed for).
2. How current performance relates to good performance.
3. How to close the gap between current and good performance.

When discussing feedback, make it clear **when** students can expect to receive it. This includes receiving feedback in an informal, ongoing basis during teaching activities. Feedback methods should be detailed in the course documentation, in the course and module handbooks, on MyBeckett and explored during timetabled sessions. Asking students **in what form** they would like to receive feedback, for different types of assessment, may give them increased agency and make them more likely to engage with it.

Introducing students to marking criteria, and how they relate to the learning outcomes, should be discussed with students before the assessment is undertake, and supported with exemplars, so they have a better appreciation of how a mark is determined.

Consider the following when giving feedback, to enable students to take every opportunity to use it to understand their current achievement and improve their performance in the future.

1. **Use clear grading criteria** so that students can understand what is expected of them and how the work has been graded.
   a. Any grading criteria should clearly align to learning outcomes.
   b. Use these grading criteria during feedback (this could be a marking grid or rubric).
   c. Use words in feedback that build skills appropriate to the level of learning e.g. critical thinking, critical reflection etc and signpost the students to resources to inform clarity and students' understanding.

2. Ensure there is a **clear structure** to your feedback comments so that a student can follow it through the assessment.

3. Make the feedback feel **personal**, and not just generic to all students on taking that assessment, make sure they know the person to contact if they have any questions. Receiving negative feedback can be challenging for some students so framing it kindly and constructively is important. Seeking their views on their performance initially is a good starting point.

4. **Keep it focussed:** too much feedback can be unhelpful as students feel overwhelmed and not know what they should focus on.

5. **Be specific** with comments (whether verbal, or written) in relation to the assessment criteria
   E.g. *not* just 'you need to be more critical' instead *try* 'you need to be more critical because' or 'You have critically assessed some of the points but not all, think about …….'

6. Provide clear, achievable **action points** that focus on the students improving their future learning, the quality of the work and their level of achievement.

7. Emphasise the **transferability** of any feedback received - how can they use it in other modules? For other types of assessment in the future?

8. **Be balanced** in the amount of positive and constructive critique you provide. You may consider using a "feedback sandwich" (positive – constructive – positive). Encourage the student (perhaps in an academic advisor catch up meeting) to self-reflect on what their good/weaker/development points are.

9. Identify and provide **opportunities for questions** from students about their feedback. You may want to encourage them to reflect on the more low-stakes formative assessment that may have taken place earlier in the module.

10. **Pitch feedback sensitively and constructively** - a misinterpreted comment can cause unintended stress to students or feel like a personal critique, rather than that of the work.

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This is particularly important for students who are improving a "failed" assessment. Use of audio feedback can help with this as voice intonation can give a greater sense of the meaning of your comments.

11. You should consider being as **inclusive** as possible to all groups of students and use alternative or combinations of feedback methods to suit a greater range of students.
    a. Audio/verbal feedback
    b. In class discussion/feedback session
    c. Peer feedback - get the students to work together in class on reviewing example assessments and their own work.

12. **Be explicit about what feedback is**, why it is useful and the breadth of what it entails. Encourage the individual students to identify what sorts of feedback are **most useful** for them, this can be done as part of Academic Advisor meetings.

13. Encourage students to self-refer early to **Skills for Learning** for tailored resources and help (workshops, individual one to one sessions) if you notice core academic skills need improving. You could provide direct links within electronic feedback tools.

Marking grids and Rubrics

Information on how and why marking grids can be used to support effective feedback can be found on the Teach Learn page, this includes the generic marking grids that can be used as a base to build rubrics for your specific context.

Further Reading

Further information and references can be found on the Teach Learn webpage.