WHAT IS FEEDBACK?

The aim of feedback can be seen as either:

- **FORMATIVE**: Feedback to help you improve or develop your work while there is still time to make improvements or changes.

- **SUMMATIVE**: Information that usually comes at the end of a module or assignment that tells you how you have performed – this could be a grade or could include written feedback, either personal or generic.

Feedback exists in any process, activity or information that enhances learning. It provides you with the opportunity to **reflect** on your marks and **understand** your strengths as well as **identify** areas requiring improvement.

Feedback can take many forms. The written form of feedback you receive when essays are marked is important, but is not the only form of feedback you will receive. For example:

- Tutors often provide feedback during seminar discussions and consultation and feedback hours, providing advice before and after various assignments.

- Tutors may provide feedback on assignment plans either in person or by email.

- All tutors have consultation and feedback hours when they are available to give feedback and provide advice.

In addition to the module organiser or seminar tutor, you can get advice from the personal tutor assigned to you by the department. You will also receive extensive advice from your East Asian Studies dissertation supervisors.

The three main forms of feedback are therefore:

- Comments on essays and exam answers.

- Discussions in class.

- Talking through your ideas with tutors or peers.

Indeed, you will encounter a variety of forms of feedback during your time at Sheffield. Some will be more obvious than others, and it is important that you are able to recognise and respond to feedback appropriately. Feedback is not something that you should passively receive. It is important to realise, therefore, that feedback is a two-way discussion that should allow you to reflect upon and analyse your work in order to improve future performance.

FORMS OF FEEDBACK

Feedback comes in many forms and each type will help you in a different way. It is important to understand the types of feedback you might encounter for the work you are undertaking.

**Written feedback**

- Ideas and observations, corrections, advice

**Verbal feedback**

- During or after classes

- From tutors / peers about essays and plans

- Discussion of essay marks and comments

Feedback is not only provided in formal review or assignment situations, it may be provided on a day-to-day basis in tutorials and through casual discussion. Feedback presented in this way can be just as valuable as a written feedback sheet or notated coursework.

**FEEDBACK FORMATS**

**FEEDBACK AS**

| ADVICE | “If I were you, I would take this approach because...” |
| GUIDANCE | “Have you thought about trying this...?” |
| COACHING | “What you did worked well in this way. Next time try doing it this way...” |
| DIRECTION | “Do this...” |
| GRADE | “This is how well your work addressed the assessment criteria...” |
Feedback can be an exceptionally useful tool, so it is vital that you take as much from it as possible.

**ENGAGING WITH FEEDBACK**

Many students ignore written feedback and only consider their grade. The grade is important but doing this misses a vital opportunity for action and improvement. Feedback should be a two-way process, an ongoing dialogue between you and your tutors and sometimes your peers. In order for feedback to work for you, you need to engage with the process so that you can improve your future performance.

**FEEDBACK IS ABOUT LEARNING**

Feedback will help you to improve your future performance as well as provide comments on work you have already submitted. It should affirm what you already know and offer encouragement that leads to improved future performance. The various forms of feedback include: written and face to face (both individual and collectively) electronically via MOLE, by email, in academic consultation and feedback hours, from your tutors or peers in seminars, a conversation with your tutor/supervisor, annotation of your written work etc. You are encouraged to look at your performance across all modules and make connections between strengths and weaknesses across the board. These can then be discussed with your personal tutor in order to improve.

As part of the learning process, you will usually need to actively reflect upon and interpret your feedback for it to be effective. Ask for clarification if there is something you don’t understand. Don’t repeat the same mistakes. Before starting a new piece of work, review previous feedback and think about how it might inform the next assignment.

**FEEDBACK IS TIMELY**

You will receive regular feedback throughout your modules. The department aims to mark all essays and other work submitted during the semester within three weeks of receipt (excluding vacation weeks). You will be notified by email when your feedback is available to view or collect.

Keep a record of feedback and use it to inform future work

**IMPORTANT**: In order to keep a record of your marks and the comments to refer back to for future assignments, you are advised to save a copy of your work. Any marks and comments provided through MOLE will only be available for the period in which you are studying the module, so it is important that you download them as soon as possible as you will not be able to retrieve them at a later stage.

**FEEDBACK IS DELIVERED CONSISTENTLY**

Your feedback will be delivered in an accessible and consistent manner and will relate to the module assessment criteria and learning outcomes set out in the module outlines. Although minimal comments are made on exam scripts, all students are given the opportunity to view their marked exams scripts and then use the module organiser’s consultation and feedback hours for any further advice.

**FEEDBACK IS QUALITY MAINTAINED**

The department takes feedback very seriously and has adopted a number of principles to ensure that it is delivered consistently to all students.

The department will ensure that the feedback you receive is of good quality. Internal moderation processes will ensure that the comments and marks have been arrived at accurately, consistently and fairly and in accordance with the assessment criteria.

Don’t forget, there are lots of services, resources and training courses available to help you improve your skills; all hosted through the 301 Skills Centre www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301
HINTS AND TIPS

VERBAL

Remember you can ask your reviewer questions

Make the most of the time available

If you are required to respond, take a moment to compose your answer

Ask for clarification if there is a question or answer you don’t understand

WRITTEN

Keep a record of feedback and use it to inform future work

Before starting a new piece of work, review previous feedback and incorporate the advice into your new assignment

If feedback isn’t legible, ask for clarification

Analyse feedback and apply it to your work