Top tips for improving student engagement with Assessment and Feedback

Recent analysis of our NSS feedback, and similar work undertaken at other institutions, has revealed that many of students' perceived shortcomings of assessment and feedback could be overcome through better communication between staff and students about feedback opportunities and the way in which their assessments are marked. By entering into a dialogue with students about assessment and feedback on their units, and across their course, we can improve the clarity of what we expect from them in assessments and how formative feedback (or feedforward) will help them to improve both within a unit and through their course.

The tips below for enhancing students' understanding of assessment and engagement with feedback draw on the **Understand, Engage, Act (UEA)** principles and build on a 2020/21 TDF project that brought together students and staff at Bath to uncover differences in their experiences and expectations of assessment feedback. They include specific tips to assist you in explaining to students how their assessments will be marked; what feedback will be provided and when; and how this feedback can help them improve within a unit and through their course.

Full support guidance and tips can be found on the Learning and Teaching Hub.

Understand

1. Communicate and clarify the assessment
   Ensure students understand the key tasks, timelines, learning outcomes and how any formative assessments feed into the summative assessment.
2. Provide clear information about feedback and feedforward opportunities
   Explain and signpost to students what feedback you will provide, when, and how feedforward and prior learning from previous assessments can be applied.

Engage

3. Define assessment criteria and provide exemplars
   Engage your students in discussion and debate about what 'good' looks like (e.g. background to topic, key issues, critical analysis, latest research and innovation)? Do they understand the language used, threshold concepts and are there any top tips or resources from previous cohorts you can share?
4. Develop students' self/peer review skills
   Provide self and peer assessment tools so students can test their understanding and provide opportunities for students to engage in groups to discuss ideas and practice applying marking criteria themselves.

Act

5. Maximise opportunities for students to act on feedback
   Support students to reflect and act on their feedback throughout the course (formative and summative) in order for them to enhance their feedback literacy.
6. Provide specific, focused and accessible feedforward
   Provide feedforward that is specific and focused, and that encourages students to self-identify their areas of strength and ongoing development for their next assessment and beyond.