

NORTHERN SCHOOL OF DESIGN



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Student's Guide  
to Feedback

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Always make  
sure you  
collect your  
feedback!

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## Welcome to the Northern School of Design Student's Guide to Feedback

### Why do I need this guide?

Recently the Students' Union talked to students about their **feedback** and what it meant to them. One thing which emerged was that students needed more information on exactly how to use their **feedback**. This guide will make sure you get the most out of the **feedback** you receive on your assessed work- it is going to make sure you are fully aware of just what **feedback** is and how to use it.

## Why should I bother using feedback?

Simple answer, to improve your grades. You need to **learn from your mistakes and learn what you are doing well**. Your lecturer doesn't give **feedback** for the fun of it, they do it to help you progress. You should be able to see a progressive rise in your grades, and you should find that you are more easily able to complete your work safe in the knowledge that what you are doing is on advice from your lecturer on previous work.

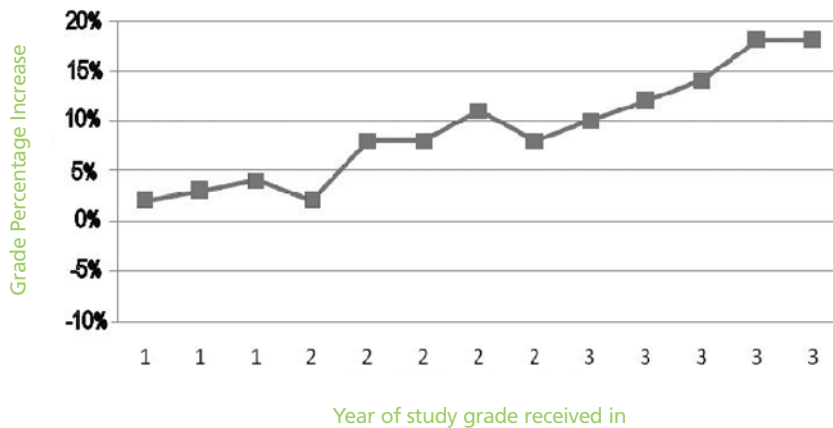
Below is a case study of a UCLan student who used their **feedback** throughout their time at University and has seen a progression in their marks. This student has now graduated from UCLan with a degree they were extremely pleased with:

"The feedback I received on my course was excellent and the fact that I used it properly and didn't just skim read it for the grade meant that I was able to greatly improve my work throughout my degree. Of course I had to work extremely hard for three years to gain the standard of degree I wanted but I know that my feedback directly contributed to this."

Below is a graph of this student's grade progression throughout their degree (note these grades are for written assignments only and not for the entire module grade). Of course, every student works at a different level but the same story of continuous development can be seen no matter where you start from and finish.

**You should be proud of any progress you make.**

## Graph to show progression of student grades when making full use of feedback



## What exactly is Feedback?

That really is the question isn't it? **Feedback** is part of everyday life. You are always assessing people and situations and giving your thoughts and opinions on them. This in itself is **feedback**. UCLan students have said that they mostly understand **feedback** to be written comments on their work and verbal comments that go with the written comments.

Is this wrong? No, not at all, but it is a simplistic view of what **feedback** really is. **Feedback** is much more than just the comments on your work. It is a continuous learning process and a vital part of your student experience. It can be peer to peer and it can also be received in a class room situation. It also teaches you to accept criticism and praise and be constructive with it.

If this is the first time you've studied at a university, you may be used to being able to hand in numerous drafts of an assignment in order to increase your grade. University works differently and whilst your tutors will be more than happy to answer any questions or queries about your assignment, they are not required to read, review or edit your work before you hand it in.

**Feedback** can be received in two ways, as **generic feedback** and **individual feedback**.



## Great...but what does that mean?

**Individual feedback:** Individual **feedback** is what you would consider 'formal **feedback**'. Often students are not satisfied until they receive this. Your individual **feedback** would be the grades on your work, the written comments on your assignments and your 'official' meetings with your lecturers to discuss your work and it usually comes after the deadline when your work can not be changed.

**Generic feedback:** Generic **feedback** is something which is often not recognised by students as being **feedback**, when actually it is a very important form of **feedback**. It can often take the form of a conversation with a lecturer about your work before you hand it in. It could come from another student in a group discussion about your work. It could be your lecturer addressing the class with generic comments. Whatever form it takes, generic **feedback** is what it says; **feedback**. Just because you have not received your work back with detailed written comments all over it yet (individual **feedback**) does not necessarily mean you have not received any **feedback** at all. You will though always get individual **feedback**.

Always pay attention to feedback, it is useful, no matter what form it takes.

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YOU'RE GETTING  
FEEDBACK

*This is what you would consider to be individual feedback and this is normally what the feedback sheet would look like in your School. Image for reference only.*

Department of Design		uclan	
<b>Feedback</b>			
<small>This form is to supplement any verbal feedback given in critiques, one-to-one tutorials and group sessions. Feedback will be provided on the following work to be assessed:</small>			
Course: Games Design	Module CODE: XB 3001	Year: 3	
Student: _____	Year: 3		
Date: 27/10/08	Time: 11:44		
<b>STUDENT'S</b>			
[Large empty box for student's response]			
<b>ASSAS TO APPROVE:</b>			
[Large empty box for staff/assessor response]			
Staff signature		Student signature	

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## When should I expect feedback?

The Card says you should expect feedback on assessed work in 15 working days.

- ▶ You should expect at least generic **feedback** on any written assignments, presentations, logbooks, performances or other such course work projects in 15 working days. Note that 15 working days means days that the University is open and functioning, so this for example would not include a Bank Holiday and over Christmas when the University is normally closed for up to 6 working days.
- ▶ On your written examinations you should receive generic **feedback** within 15 working days of publication of the results. This **feedback** may be verbal, written through e-mail or other means. However, individual written **feedback** should follow this generic **feedback** on written examinations.
- ▶ For your dissertation or final project you should also expect generic **feedback** within 15 working days of publication of results (unless you have a viva voce in which case it will be before results publication) which should later be followed up by individual written **feedback**.
- ▶ For any assessment that you do at UCLan which contributes to your module mark should receive individual **feedback**.
- ▶ Please note that if your lecturer cannot get your **feedback** to you in 15 working days, they should always inform you so you know when to expect it.

## What should I expect in 15 working days?

- ▶ In 15 working days you should expect generic **feedback** on your assessment.
- ▶ This generic **feedback** could be in the form of a class discussion, a conversation with your lecturer, or peer **feedback**.
- ▶ Sometimes your lecturer may be able to provide you with individual written **feedback** in 15 days which is great, a real gold standard.
- ▶ Your tutor may not be able to meet with you to go through every piece of work you do, this is especially true for modules with large numbers of students. However, you should be able to meet with them at least once during your module to discuss your work.
- ▶ As previously stated, if your lecturer is unable to deliver individual **feedback** in 15 days they will let you know.

If you are considered a distance learner please note that you should expect feedback on assessed work in 20 working days

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## Ok, so now I've got some feedback - what do I do with it?

**Don't just look at the grade** Yes, the grade you receive is important but that is all it can tell you. You need to read the rest of your **feedback** to know how to improve your next grade and how you got there with this one. If your mark is better than you expected you need to know why so you can make sure you do the same next time. You cannot change your grade, but *you can improve your next grade by using your **feedback**.*

**Read it or listen to it** In whatever form it comes to you, whether it's written on paper, on an e-mail or in an audio file, take notice of it. Your lecturer has spent time doing this to help you, and just as you expect them to read your assignment, they expect you to read their **feedback**.

**Make sure you understand it** You need to make sure you know what your lecturer means. If you don't understand your **feedback**, it ends up being meaningless. Go and see your lecturer for clarification if you need to.

**Think about it** How can the **feedback** you've received on this assignment help you with your next piece of work? Were there comments about your general writing style, presentation, referencing? Each piece of assessed work you do does not stand alone, it is possible for it to be applied elsewhere.

**Talk about it** Whether it is with your lecturer for clarification and more detail, or if it is with your course mates, talking about your **feedback** can help you to better understand it. You and your course mates can also learn things from each other.

**Keep it** Even though you read your **feedback** when you get it, chances are you may have forgotten what much of it says when your next assignment is handed in. So make sure you keep it so you can refer back to it. It's also nice to have a look back at how much your work has improved from one year to the next.



## What else do I need to know in?

Quite often in Design you will hear people use the term 'crit', this is short for Critique and not to be mistaken for criticism. The crit is a long established term and process used in design for hundreds of years. The term means to establish the value of something, in this case some of your work, and not to criticise which often has a negative association. To offer critique of somebody's work is to objectively offer comment on the good and potentially the bad aspects of the work. In an academic case the indication of the weaker aspects of the work is an important aspect of your education so as to enable you to effect positive change in these areas.

So the crit is an important part of your **feedback**, where tutors and possibly your peers offer observations and critique your work. This may include positive and negative comments. Positive comments are always welcome and these indicate areas that you are strong in, but you should always strive to improve these areas. Negative comments can be a little disheartening at first but you should consider how you can tackle the issue they have highlighted. Tutors will never offer a negative comment unjustly and these comments will be supported by a course of action you can follow to make sure that it does not happen

again. In reality these negative comments are often the most valuable ones as they are clearly indicating where you need to improve and how.

If at the end of a crit, and in receipt of some **feedback** you feel that you do not fully understand the comment, or see how you can improve, you should always book some time with the tutor and go through the **feedback** again until you do understand the nature of the **feedback**. If you do not do this then how will you improve your work in the future.

Within the Northern School of Design you are fortunate that you experience a great deal of contact with teaching staff during the long studio based sessions. During this time you will have the opportunity to talk to staff as well as be available for staff to comment on your work. These 'informal' conversations in the studio are in effect **feedback** too, with staff offering immediate comments on your work and how you might improve it. You should be prepared to take full advantage of this contact and remember to act upon advice given by staff.

Within the Northern School of Design there are two types of **feedback**, Formative and Summative. Formative **feedback** is given mid module and it is intended

to provide you with some guidance as to your achievements to date, and what you need to do in order to improve your work for the final submission. Summative **feedback** is given at the end of a module and it defines your overall achievement within the module. Summative **feedback** can also include suggestions as to how to improve your work in future modules.

## Conclusion

We hope you have found this guide useful and you now have a greater understanding about the importance of **feedback**. The table on the reverse should prove very useful for you to be able to recognise the use that **feedback** has been to you. Fill it in when you start to receive **feedback** and we hope that you can see a progression in your work.



# STOP, LOOK, LISTEN AND USE

## Student's Feedback Action Plan *(complete after each piece of assessment)*

Three things I did which attracted positive **feedback**:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Three things I did which attracted critical **feedback**:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Three things I will do to address my critical **feedback**:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

The most useful **feedback** I received was:

\_\_\_\_\_

I will always use the **feedback** I receive because:

\_\_\_\_\_

Three improvements I have noticed from using my **feedback** are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Use in conjunction with the 'This Way Up' Student Guide to Assessment [www.uclan.ac.uk/ldu/StudentGuideToAssessment/](http://www.uclan.ac.uk/ldu/StudentGuideToAssessment/)

Copies available from **Learning Development Unit, University of Central Lancashire,**  
**Preston PR1 2HE Telephone 01772 892370**



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