

LANCASHIRE LAW SCHOOL



STOP  
LOOK  
LISTEN

Student's Guide  
to Feedback

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Always make  
sure you  
collect your  
feedback!

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## Welcome to the Lancashire Law School 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.

Below are two case studies of UCLan students who have utilised their **feedback** throughout their time at University and both have seen a progression in their grades. The first case study is of a student who has now graduated from UCLan with a first class (hons) degree, they said:

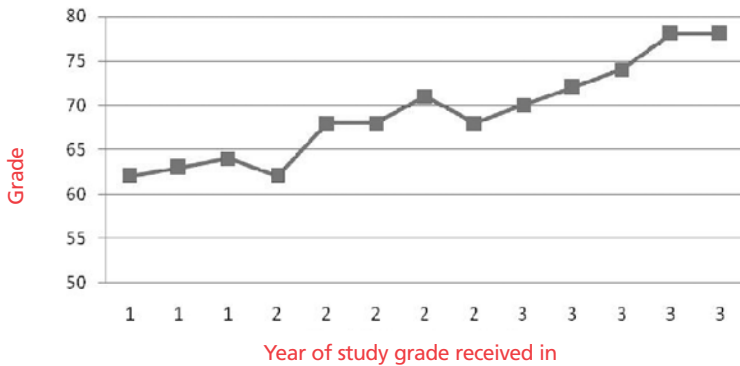
"The feedback I received on my course was excellent and the fact that I used it properly and didn't just skim read it for the grade meant that I was able to greatly improve my work throughout my degree. Of course I had to work extremely hard for three years to gain a first but I know that my feedback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

## Why should I bother using feedback?

Simple answer...to improve your work and 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.

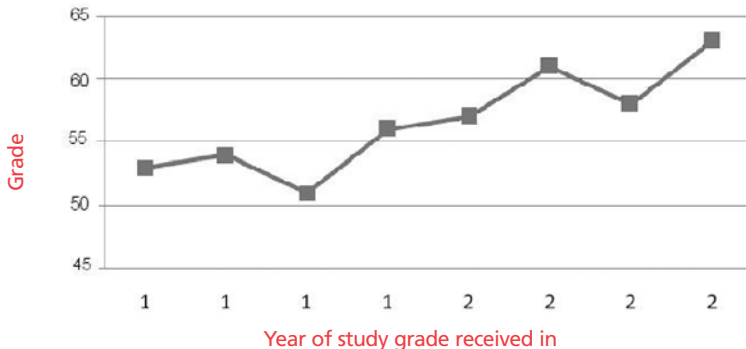
Below is a graph of this student's course work grades throughout their degree (note these grades are for written assignments only and not for the entire module grade).

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



Not everyone is going to be able to achieve first class honours but the same story of continuous improvement can be seen below in the profile below of a more typical student at the end of the second year.

## 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 (with your course mates) 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 this is not possible. Whilst your tutors will be happy to attempt to clarify issues in response to specific questions about the law in areas relevant to the assignment, they are not able to comment on answer plans or draft answers as your submitted answer is required to be your own individual work.

**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 could take the form of a conversation with a lecturer about your performance in seminars. It could be your lecturer addressing the class with general comments about a piece of work recently submitted. In many modules, generic **feedback** may be provided in the form of a report made available on eLearn (Web CT). 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**.

*This coursework cover sheet is one example of a common way in which you will receive individual feedback and this is normally what the feedback sheet would look like in the Law School. Image for reference only.*

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE LANCASHIRE LAW SCHOOL COURSEWORK		***Student Details***																																																	
SUBMISSION/FEEDBACK FORM		**Student Name: _____																																																	
**MODULE: _____		*****Student ID Number: _____																																																	
**Submission Title: _____		**Word Count: _____																																																	
**Submission Date: _____		I certify that this assignment is all my own work and that the content has been fully researched and properly acknowledged and that the declared word count is accurate.																																																	
		**Trainer Signature: _____																																																	
Student's	Logged in Date: _____																																																		
**Trainer Signature: _____	**Trainer Signature: _____	External examiner initials: _____																																																	
<p><b>PLEASE NOTE: ALL MARKS ARE DETERMINED AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER. THE FINAL MARK WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE JURY BOARD (IF APPLICABLE).</b></p> <p><b>THE JURY BOARD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE WILL BE ADVISED OF THE MARKS WHICH WILL BE REFERRED TO THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER AND TO THE BOARD AS TO WHICH MARKS OF YOUR WORK ARE GOOD OR WHICH NEED IMPROVEMENT. Specific advice on areas for improvement, if necessary, will also be made available to you based on the external marks assessment of each assignment.</b></p> <p>GENERAL COMMENTS (to include strengths and areas for improvement):</p>																																																			
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>JUROR</th> <th>MARKING CRITERIA FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT</th> <th>MARKS</th> <th>MARKS</th> <th>COMMENT</th> <th>MARK</th> <th>SATISFACTORY</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>Comprehension &amp; analysis: demonstrating knowledge &amp; understanding of the issue</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Quality of analysis &amp; application of points &amp; precedents</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Structure</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Quality of expression and referencing</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Timeliness of final product &amp; spelling</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>RELEVANT APPLICATION OF THE LAW</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			JUROR	MARKING CRITERIA FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT	MARKS	MARKS	COMMENT	MARK	SATISFACTORY		Comprehension & analysis: demonstrating knowledge & understanding of the issue							Quality of analysis & application of points & precedents							Structure							Quality of expression and referencing							Timeliness of final product & spelling							RELEVANT APPLICATION OF THE LAW					
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Always pay attention to feedback, it is useful, no matter what form it takes.

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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 coursework 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 or end of module assessments you should receive generic **feedback** within 15 working days of publication of the results. This **feedback** may be verbal or written through e-mail or other means but will normally be available by means of a summary on eLearn (Web CT). However, individual **feedback** will also be available following this generic **feedback**, normally through your seminar tutor.
- ▶ For your dissertation or final project you should also expect generic **feedback** within 15 working days of publication of results which should later be followed up by the availability of individual written **feedback** from your Supervisor.
- ▶ For any assessment that you do at UCLan which contributes to your module mark you should receive individual **feedback**.
- ▶ Please note that if your lecturer cannot get your individual **feedback** to you within 15 working days of the submission date of your coursework, they should always provide you with advance information as to when to expect it.

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

**STOP**  
**LISTEN**  
YOU'RE GETTING  
**FEEDBACK**

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.

## 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 a report available on eLearn (Web CT).
- ▶ Sometimes your lecturer may be able to provide you with individual written **feedback** in 15 days where the numbers taking a module assessment permit this.
- ▶ You should have a meeting with your tutor to discuss the **feedback** on any major pieces of work that you do and it is important that you take up opportunities to do this which are scheduled or advertised by your tutors.
- ▶ Your tutors will make clear to you in advance the way in which **feedback** will be made available and the type of **feedback** which will be available within the 15 days.



## 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 can I do if I'm not happy with the feedback I've received?

Your **feedback** will normally be made available through your seminar tutor even though that person may not always have been the first marker of your work. If you initially do not understand the **feedback** or are not happy with the level of **feedback** received, first of all explain to your seminar tutor what it is you do not understand or are not happy with. In most cases your seminar tutor will be able to resolve your concerns but if you remain unclear or unhappy, you should approach the Module Leader (usually the person who delivers the lectures) to ask for further clarification and/or you could discuss the matter with your Personal Tutor who may also be able to help. This should enable matters to be resolved. But if you remain unhappy you should raise the matter with your Year Tutor or Course Leader. If the problem is common to a number of students or modules, it could be raised through your Course Representatives at the Staff/Student Liaison Committee.

There is of course a difference between being unhappy with the level or type of **feedback** received, and being unhappy with the content of the **feedback**, or the mark given, or the academic judgement made. It has to be stressed that there is no appeal against academic judgement. Nor can the mark given be challenged. But you are entitled to an intelligible explanation of how your marks have been arrived at, and your **feedback** is designed to enable you to understand this so that you can use this information in order to optimise your performance in future assessments.

There is of course a difference between being unhappy with the level or type of feedback received, and being unhappy with the content of the feedback, or the mark given, or the academic judgement made.



## What else do I need to know?

### In-course assessments (as opposed to end of module final assessments)

Generic **feedback** on all in-module course works and similar elements of assessment which contribute to a module will be made available to students within 15 working days of the scheduled submission date. The mechanism generally including a written summary on the module's eLearn (Web CT) website. For all such assessments, students will also be provided with individual written **feedback** as soon as is practicable, within or outside the 15 day period depending on the numbers taking the module.

Normally this will involve the use of **feedback** sheets. These will include reference to the learning outcomes and marking criteria, the relative degrees of success in achieving them, areas of strength and an indication of areas for improvement. Students will normally be given times during which they should receive their individual **feedback** in person from their seminar tutor so that the written comments on the **feedback** sheet or on the body of the coursework can be expanded upon, or clarified, or put into context.

It is important that students take up such opportunities as there is a high correlation between doing so and greater levels of success in the module and course overall.

Guidance in advance about how best to prepare for submission of coursework can also be found in the School Coursework Guide and further reference to this guide after receiving results or **feedback** may also help to explain the strengths and weaknesses of work previously submitted.

feedback may also help to explain the strengths and weaknesses of work previously submitted.

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## Examination and other end-of-module assessments

Procedures for publishing examination and other end of module assessment results follow University schedules and guidelines.

Generic **feedback** on examinations and other end of module assessments and dissertations will be made available within 15 working days following the publication of results, and will generally be made available via the eLearn (Web CT) module website. Individual **feedback** can be obtained by making an appointment with the module seminar tutor or the Module Leader.

It is particularly important for students required to re-sit in August that they seek an appointment with their Module Tutor in the week following publication of results at the end of June and that they attend revision sessions for core modules which are scheduled during the first half of July. Students successfully progressing to the following year should also seek individual **feedback** from their module tutor either following publication of results or on return to the University during the first couple of weeks in September to take advantage of any lessons that can be learned from the previous summer's examinations.

## Seminar Performance

In seminars **feedback** is more informally given by tutors through comments made on the various contributions of students. Students can periodically gain more specific and frank **feedback** either by making an appointment with their Seminar Tutor or by emailing to ask for an indication of their performance to date. It may also be instructive to discuss within the peer group from time to time how your own performance appears to your peers.

## Personal tutors

Students should meet individually with their Personal Tutor at least once per term to discuss their overall performance to date, and whether there are any areas for personal development which can help to improve their performance or the quality of their learning.



## Other opportunities for feedback and advice

More generally, Module Tutors have availability times notified on their doors and on the School eLearn (Web CT) information website and are always willing at such times to provide more general **feedback** and academic advice to students who seek it. In addition to the above formal opportunities in relation to specific topics or pieces of work.

Furthermore, in preparation for examinations, Module Tutors are happy to make comments and give **feedback** on attempted answers to questions from past papers or other suitable questions. This is an excellent way of preparing for unseen examinations once students have completed a particular topic (and undertaken any necessary revision in preparation so as to make any such attempt meaningful.) Staff are not permitted however to make comments on draft answers to coursework questions which have yet to be handed in although they are of course willing to answer questions designed to clarify a student's understanding of the Law on a particular topic provided it is not a disguised attempt to seek an answer to the question set for assessment.

## The importance of the student input

Overall, the role of staff is to assist students in gaining their own understanding of the curriculum, to enable students to put themselves in a position where they can realistically expect to demonstrate their own knowledge and understanding by successfully undertaking their course assessments. Staff put in a lot of effort to provide meaningful feedback to students on assessments already taken so as to enable students to improve their understanding and performance as they progress through the course. The course provides a wide range of opportunities for students to engage with staff and to receive **feedback** in all the various ways mentioned in this guide. The more that an individual student puts into the course and into the learning process, the greater the degree, variety, frequency and utility of the **feedback** that will be likely to be received.

## Conclusion

We hope you have found this guide useful and you now have a greater understanding about the importance of **feedback**. The table over the page 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. Some guidance on **feedback** specific to your School will follow and we hope that this is equally as useful.



# 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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