Frequently asked questions about feedback

Working on your next hand-in? Forgotten to reflect on feedback from previous assignments, coursework or exams? This happens all too often, however, receiving and making use of feedback is crucial for helping you progress in your studies and achieving the grades you are striving for.

Check out these handy ‘Feedback FAQs’ which cover how to request and get the most from your academic feedback, the ways in which feedback is given and more! The advice here has all been written by fellow students.

If you would like to share your own thoughts or pose questions for other students to help with, please write answers or advice alongside the question they relate to or your own question in the comment section on the bottom of this page. You will need to create a [Medium account](https://help.medium.com/hc/en-us/articles/115004915268-Sign-in-or-sign-up-to-Medium) to do this.

# Requesting Feedback

## “Should I request a marking criteria for an assignment if one hasn’t been provided?”

Yes, it’s always valuable to know what is expected of you. And lecturers should have marking criteria prepared to ensure the fairness of marking.

## **“How long do I have to wait to get my feedback?”**

Usually, it is at least a couple of weeks. Lecturers have a lot of students and then need to check all of their assignments before releasing your grades.

Additionally, the assignments need to go through a moderation process to ensure marks are fair and consistent. Each school usually has its own set timelines for releasing feedback which may differ between schools so check with the lecturer who set the assignment to find out.

## **“How much feedback will I get?”**

In addition to an overall mark, feedback usually contains comments on individual aspects throughout your assignment as well as a summary which includes things you did well and what you could improve on for next time. You may have been given marking criteria to help you understand how to best approach the assignment. If this is the case, you are usually also provided with a few sentences on how well you have addressed each criterion. Overall, you will usually get a few sentences of feedback for each marking criteria and some improvement suggestions.

“What can I do if I don’t get enough feedback?”  
You can ask your module or course leader for further feedback. They want you and all their other students to do well so they will likely be more than happy to help you further! When asking, phrase it in a way that suggests you want to have more feedback in order to improve your marks on your next assignments. You can catch them at the end of a lecture or perhaps drop them an email to arrange a convenient time to meet and discuss your feedback. Emails can get lost, so it is better to approach them in person.

Some assignments may be marked by Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and may not be the most thorough, so your module leader can also help you to interpret or clarify anything that isn’t clear. If you like, you could also ask your friends for the feedback they received to see whether any of the comments may apply to your assignment.

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# Understanding Feedback

## **“What kind of feedback will I get?”**

When writing an essay or a group work you will often receive one or two paragraphs talking about overall positives and negatives of your work. Do not expect a detailed one by one analysis. For other types of assessments for example those involving computations, you may have the right answer together with the solutions leading to the answer, as your feedback. For exams, you often don’t get any feedback. Depending on the school, you may be allowed to view your scripts after they have been marked just to see how they were marked. This is usually optional and done under examination conditions. You may also receive positive or negative feedback on your techniques in healthcare placements.

## **“What if I don’t understand the marking criteria?”**

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## **“What if I don’t know how to act on my tutor’s suggestions and feedback?”**

Ask them to discuss your feedback further and ask for examples of how they think you could improve.

## **“Who can I discuss my feedback with?”**

You can talk to your lecturer or tutor; another useful person would be your Academic Advisor.

It may also be helpful to ask your classmates for their help or opinion if you are comfortable doing so. They can sometimes be helpful, especially where they are good at things you are weak at (as identified in your negative feedback).

# Using Feedback

## **“Should I still look at the feedback if I am not going to do another assignment like this one?”**

Yes! It’s very valuable to know what you did right and did wrong. Even if your other assignments aren’t exactly like this one you can still learn a lot and implement some of the feedback. One or more assessed work may have similar bits especially in terms of presentation, so feedback from one assignment may be very useful for another.

## **“If I got a good grade, why should I be interested in what the written feedback says?”**

It’s useful to know what you did right, so that next time you can repeat your success. Additionally, even if you got a good grade there might be some areas you could improve which is worth knowing. There may be key issues in your writing that may affect future exams/assessments so it's always safe to get constructive feedback to work on those issues earlier on.

## **“What if I don’t know what to do with my feedback?”**

Try to sit down and analyse what the feedback is saying. Write down a couple of bullet points summarising the main points. Then, reflect how you could implement it.

You can also approach your lecturers, school, or programme directors for more information. With blended and online learning, this may seem like a challenge, but remember that the staff is there to support your learning. Keep in mind that your school or programme may have already set up ways for you to get more feedback. For example, some schools might encourage you to ask your academic advisor, others may have bulletin boards, some lecturers would like you to email them, and others may be happy to discuss it at the end of a lecture or seminar. By using these resources, you can get the most out of your feedback.

## **“How do I deal with negative feedback?”**

Try to remember that this is not personal, and the lecturer is not attacking you, they want you to be your best self and turn in your best work. So don’t get upset but instead try to look at it objectively and derive some key conclusions, then try to think about how you would improve on them.

Sometimes it helps to give yourself space from the feedback by not looking at it again for a few days so that when you come back to it, you can take a more detached view.

## **“What do I do with the feedback I get?”**

Try really reflecting on it and make a list of key takeaways. Then think about how you can implement these changes in future assignments.

Try to look for patterns in the feedback. This could range from “more references needed” to “check grammar”, but every little thing can help you in the next piece of coursework.

# **Further support**

* Learning more about academic feedback, marking criteria and how to use feedback to improve in this set of [resources from My Learning Essentials](https://medium.com/@mlemanchester/making-the-most-of-academic-feedback-2acb6ee0abdb).
* If you have any questions about feedback that haven’t been covered here, the helpful Student Team are available to offer peer support at the [Library Drop-In](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/using-the-library/students/training-and-skills-support/my-learning-essentials/workshops/?category=Drop-ins) sessions.