



# **Evaluating feedback mechanisms and creating a new forward-thinking code of practice on feedback and assessment.**

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## Outline of Presentation

1. Background: NSS since 2007/8
2. University Teaching Fellowship: Feedback project



## Background.

### NSS Results 2007/8:

- Overall satisfaction: 86%
- Feedback and assessment: 51%

## Action plan 2008/9

### - Introduced:

#### 1. Feedback Zone on VLE:

- exam feedback all modules

→ positive feedback from students.

#### 2. Feedback Week

- information meetings for final years

→ well attended (75%)

- one to one feedback on exams

→ very poor take up (<7%)



## Results

### NSS Results 2008/9:

- Overall satisfaction: 91% (+5)
- Feedback and assessment: 62% (+11)

Similar result at Edinburgh.



## Action plan 2009/10

- Maintained:
  1. Feedback Zone on VLE:
    - exam feedback all modules
  2. Feedback Week
    - information meetings for final years
- Removed:
  - one to one feedback on exams



## Results

### NSS Results 2009/10:

- Overall satisfaction: 83% (-8)
- Feedback and assessment: 55% (-7)

***(In)action on feedback has an impact on NSS!***



## NSS:

### Intelligence from recent GEES NSS conference in Manchester:

- Scores for **teaching** correlate most with **overall satisfaction**.
- Scores for **academic support** and **organisation & management** also important.

## Key questions that affect overall satisfaction score (in rank order, for all courses, normalised for subject differences):

1. Q15: The course is well organised and is running smoothly (**organisation**)
2. Q1: Staff are good at explaining things (**teaching**)
3. Q4: The course is intellectually stimulating (**teaching**)
4. Q14: Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively (**organisation**)
5. Q10: I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies (**academic support**)
6. Q11: I have been able to contact staff when I needed to (**academic support**)
7. Q3: Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching (**teaching**)
8. Q2: Staff have made the subject interesting (**teaching**)
9. Q12: Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices (**academic support**)
10. Q6: Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair (**assessment and feedback**)



## So, why bother with a project on assessment and feedback?

Improving **student experience**, not simply NSS score, but...

- Analysis of NSS data shows feedback and assessment more important factor for GEES subjects.
- GEES students want prompt and useful feedback.
- Evidence that students include feelings about assessment and feedback under **teaching** and **academic support** questions.



## Other information.....

### Detailed NSS sub-questions: *biggest fallers:*

5. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance 70% (-11)
6. Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair 66% (-18)

## Other information.....

### **NSS qualitative comments: *most cited negatives:***

Poor/slow feedback (19 comments)

Poor teaching (10 comments)

Inconsistent marking/criteria (8 comments)

## Other information.....

### **UG Programme Survey Level 1**

Feedback on my work has been prompt **40% (-12)**

### ***UG Programme Survey level 2:***

Feedback on my work has been prompt **26% (-5)**

I have received detailed comments on my work **38% (-6)**

### ***PGT programme survey home students***

Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair **54% (-20)**

Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand **36% (-19)**

### ***PGT programme survey overseas students:***

I have received detailed comments on my work **41% (-12)**

Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand **29% (-11)**

***Plus comments from the external examiners!***



So....

Obtained University Teaching Fellowship to undertake detailed project on feedback.



## *“Evaluating Feedback Mechanisms in the School of Earth and Environment”*

### **Project Aims:**

- Evaluate policy and practice of assessment feedback
- Investigate staff and student opinions/perceptions
- Identify strengths and weaknesses of current practice
- Create and implement a strategy for improvement



## Project methodology:

- Literature review
- Investigate current feedback projects at Leeds
- Initial informal staff/student interviews
- Focus group sessions with staff and students
- Questionnaires
- Collation and interpretation of data
- Distil out *key recommendations*.



## Key themes from literature review:

- Assessment Feedback is a hot topic....
- *“The Great NUS Feedback Amnesty”*
- Assessment is for Learning philosophy
- Formative vs. Summative assessment and feedback
- *“Engaging Students with Assessment Feedback”* –HEA project under the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) initiative



## Concurrent projects at Leeds

- *“Developing World-Class Assessment Feedback tools for Engineering”* - (Prof. Simon Biggs, Faculty of Engineering)
- *“The MARK project –Making Assessment Relationships Known”* - (Prof. Mitch Waterman, Faculty of Medicine)

Projects share a focus on feedback, but have different aims and methodologies.

## Data gathering approach

### **Focus groups** – *a discussion based methodology*

- *An open and soft* approach
- Avoidance of *closed* or *leading* questioning
- Data more cumbersome to handle/distil but far-reaching and inclusive rather than prescriptive

**Questionnaires** used as a corollary to focus groups



## Themes explored in focus groups

- Current school policy
- Feedback as related to assessment aims/objectives
- Clarity of marking criteria
- Formative vs. Summative assessment and feedback
- Engaging with feedback (staff and students)
- Feedback mechanisms (efficacy and preference)
- Innovative feedback and ways forward



## Data handling

- Focus groups recorded for complete data capture
- Major recurring themes/opinions noted
- Comprehensive comparison of staff and student data
- Major recurring themes used to inform questionnaires
- Data from questionnaires used to affirm focus group findings



## Key recommendations

### *Short-term goals:*

- Raise student awareness of feedback and its role
- Create a new *Feedback code of practice* for staff
- Create better links between assessment aims and objectives and feedback provided
- Provide concise marking criteria and link it to feedback
- Re-appraisal of generic feedback sheets
- Encourage staff to adopt mechanisms favoured by students
- Encourage staff to share good practice



## Key recommendations

### *Long-term goals:*

- Aim to design/re-write courses around assessment and feedback making it more formative
- Improve links between modules with a view to making assessment and feedback provision more effective and harmonious

## Outcomes and planned deliverables

1. Feedback as major L&T theme for 2010-11
2. Distinct and highly visual campaign to help raise awareness and advertise feedback related events



## Outcomes and planned deliverables

3. New code of practice for staff written
  - *Timely feedback*
  - *Adopt mechanisms favoured by students*
  - *Bespoke feedback sheets (more to follow...)*
4. Feedback Handbook for students
  - *Aimed primarily at first year students*
  - *Primes them for recognising and making best use of feedback*
5. Strategic calendar of planned feedback events



~ for staff ~

Improving student feedback is a major Learning and Teaching priority in the School for the 2010-11 academic session. Recent consultation with staff and students alike has produced a comprehensive new *Code of Feedback* which can be found in the Staff Handbook. By adopting the following key recommendations, we can all help to improve the learning and teaching experience for our students.

\* **Provide a clear set of aims/objectives for each assessment**

Students say they feel far more confident dealing with assessment, and are also more likely to engage with feedback, when explicit assessment aims and objectives are provided. Encourage them to ask if they do not understand the task.

\* **Provide concise marking criteria for each assessment**

A major complaint brought up by students is the lack of clear and concise marking criteria in the feedback they receive. Confidence in feedback derives primarily from feeling assured of consistency in marking and how it relates to the assessment aims and objectives.

\* **Create feedback sheets that are tailored to the assessment**

Students prefer written comments on their work. However, when this is not possible, their favoured mechanism of feedback is when staff create a marking pro-forma or feedback sheet which is **tailored to the assessment** aims and objectives and clearly indicates their performance relative to marking criteria. Such a sheet should also contain a box for additional written comments when required, and should always attempt to include at least one feed-forward comment.

*.....and remember, feedback needs to be timely and useful!*

*If staff would like to know more about how to improve feedback practice or would like access to supporting literature and material, please contact Graham McLeod ([g.w.mcleod@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:g.w.mcleod@leeds.ac.uk)).*



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## Staff are being asked to:

- Provide clear aim/objectives for each assessment
- Provide concise marking criteria
- Create feedback sheets and marking pro-forma that are *tailored to the assessment*



# feedback\*

~ for students ~

Improving student feedback is a major Learning and Teaching priority in the School for the 2010-11 academic session. Recent consultation with staff and students alike has produced a new code for giving and receiving feedback, which is detailed in your **Student Feedback Handbook**. Make the most of your learning experience by engaging with feedback and bearing in mind the following:

\* **Anticipate and actively look for all forms of feedback**

Feedback comes in a whole variety of formats and styles: verbal, written, group-based, personal or even web-based. It may be formal and delivered in lectures, tutorials and practicals, or it may even come informally via chats with staff or your peers in the corridor. Recognising feedback is the first step to using it!

\* **Engage fully with all feedback that you receive**

In order to build upon your success or learn from your mistakes you need to take on board **all feedback** provided to you. This means more than simply looking at your grade -it means actively digesting the feedback and using it to inform your future study and to improve on your future assignments.

\* **If you don't understand the feedback you get, ask for help!**

It can be difficult to gain the courage to ask for clarification of feedback that you may not understand, or question feedback you don't agree with. But it's important to ask for help when you don't understand, or to clarify someone's position in relation to what you think. Discussion is a powerful tool, and sometimes all it takes is a few minutes to clarify or resolve a misunderstanding. As the saying goes: "You don't ask, you don't get!". Staff will be happy to discuss feedback with you.

***Feedback is your primary route to improvement -don't miss out!***

*If you would like to know more about recognising different forms of feedback, and how best to use the feedback you get, please contact Graham McLeod (g.w.mcleod@leeds.ac.uk).*



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## Students are asked to:

- Anticipate and actively look for feedback
- Engage fully with all feedback they receive
- If they don't understand feedback, feel they need clarification or want more, to ask for help



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## Feedback events planned for 2010-11

- Mid semester one feedback surgery sessions
- Early semester two personal tutorial sessions on feedback
- 1-2-1 exam feedback sessions for all finalists
- Pre-NSS feedback meetings with DLT and key L&T staff
- “Feedback Champions” survey for students
- Semester two pre-exam feedback surgery sessions
  - ***All supported and advertised by a highly visual poster campaign***

# Talking about Teaching

# feedback

## EVENTS 2010-11

As part of our initiative to improve Assessment Feedback in the School of Earth & Environment, we have a series of feedback-related events planned for the 2010-2011 academic session. Make sure you get the most from them!

- \* **WEEK 9** (Nov 22-27)  
**FEEDBACK SURGERY SESSIONS**  
Drop in surgery sessions to discuss all feedback-related issues. Wed 24 Nov. 1-3pm in the EVL Level 10 and Fri 26 Nov. 10-12pm in 8.119 Conference Room.
- \* **WEEK 15** (Jan 31 - Feb 4)  
**PERSONAL TUTORIAL FEEDBACK SESSION**  
Bespoke feedback tutorial session with your personal tutor in semester 2.
- \* **WEEK 15** (Jan 31 - Feb 4)  
**FEEDBACK LECTURE FOR YEAR 3/4 FINALISTS**  
All finalists are invited to attend a key lecture on feedback initiatives given by Director of Learning and Teaching Dr Rob Mortimer. Venue and time TBC by email.
- \* **WEEK 16** (Feb 7-11)  
**ONE-TO-ONE MODULE SURGERIES FOR FINALISTS**  
Module managers will be offering 1-2-1 meetings with all finalists to discuss feedback and module progress. A great exam prep. Don't miss out!!
- \* **WEEK 17** (Feb 14-18)  
**FEEDBACK CHAMPIONS SURVEY**  
Now you get to have YOUR SAY.... We want to champion staff who have provided the most effective feedback, so we will be asking you all to vote for your favourites!

If you want to know more, please contact Graham McLeod ([g.w.mcleod@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:g.w.mcleod@leeds.ac.uk)).



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## Further work

- Disseminate project findings
- Review efficacy of new initiatives at the end of the year
- Improve practice and future-proof

