ASSESSMENT, PROGRESSION AND AWARDING: TAUGHT PROGRAMMES HANDBOOK

6. Feedback

6.1   Policy Principles

6.1.1 Feedback is an essential part of the student experience, helping to promote learning and assuring academic standards and quality. It is essential that the University and its Academic Partners, particularly within Validation Partnerships, adopt assessment and feedback principles that are inclusive of all students irrespective of their backgrounds, experiences or study patterns and which are responsive to the diverse needs of the student population. Feedback can take multiple forms.

6.1.2 The University's approach to feedback for all assessments (including both coursework assignments and examinations) is based on the following principles:

   a. Effective feedback on assessment is a fundamental part of the learning and teaching process and is not separate from it.

   b. Feedback practices **should** promote effective learning and support the academic development of students.

   c. All students **should** receive parity of treatment.

   d. All feedback on assessment **should** be formative, ensuring that students are able to consider and digest comments on their work and are subsequently able to address weaknesses and build on their academic strengths.

   e. All assessment and subsequent feedback **should** be rigorous, impartial and delivered in a timely manner.

   f. The approach to feedback undertaken **should** be appropriate to the nature of the assessment type, the form of marking and feedback, and any practical/logistical considerations, as determined by the Department/Faculty. Also see 6.6.

   g. As a minimum for all assessments (coursework and examinations), and in cases where access to copies of examination scripts post-marking is not possible (for example, Multiple Choice Tests (MCTs)), Faculties **should** provide **whole cohort-level feedback.**

      i.   This can be either synchronous or asynchronous (see 6.1.3 below) and should be provided alongside confirmed marks.

ii. This could, for example, as a minimum and where appropriate to the assessment type, be a single feedback sheet provided for the whole cohort.

h. For examinations, this feedback **should** consider the questions on which the student's performance can be improved, including strategies for improving performance.

i. Students **must** be informed about how and when they will receive feedback.

6.1.3 Appropriate approaches to feedback can include one or more of the following:

a. Asynchronous whole cohort (or group) feedback (such as a written report or oral recording/podcast)

b. Asynchronous individual feedback (such as a written feedback sheet or oral recording/comments)

c. Synchronous interactive/non-interactive whole cohort (or group) feedback (including an online or in-person interaction such as a Q&A session, drop-in session or group peer-review session)

d. Synchronous interactive/non-interactive individual feedback (including a scheduled drop-in session or dedicated use of /Office Hours)

e. Where appropriate to the assessment, synchronous and/or asynchronous, and whole cohort (or group) and/or individual feedback, via Academic Tutors (also known as Personal Tutor), subgroups/group work leads, and appropriate others.

6.1.4 Module descriptors **must** contain information indicating how feedback will be provided to students following each formative and summative assessment. Where individual feedback is not routinely provided on assessments students **should** have the opportunity to receive feedback from their Academic Tutor (also known as Personal Tutor) /Module Convenor/Module Lead, or as appropriate.

6.1.5 Students **should** have the opportunity to receive feedback on their progress in a module (including on formative and/or summative assessments) before the final summative assessment element(s) of the module take place. This **may** be individual feedback or group feedback.

6.1.6 Students **should** be asked a specific question within the module evaluation about the appropriateness of the assessment and feedback on the module. The question **should** highlight the variety of forms that feedback may take.

6.2   Draft Assessments

6.2.1 Faculties (or delegated Schools) **must** discuss and be clear about the rationale for any system they adopt for the provision of feedback and/or marks on draft assessments. Equality of approach within a module **must** be a particular objective, with special reference to modules that involve the participation of a number of staff (e.g. projects, dissertations, and other team-taught modules).

6.2.2 In developing such a system, the following **should** be considered:

a.   The potential for inconsistency of practice within Departments between modules pitched at the same level and that require similar types of assessment **should** be addressed.

b.   As a minimum, a consistent approach **should** be observed by all staff contributing to an individual module, including the amount of feedback that can be expected by students.

c.   Information **should** be clear for students on how and when they will receive feedback on draft assessments (where relevant), and this should be specified in Programme/Module handbooks. Deadlines for submission of drafts (where relevant) **should** be outlined clearly, including any other requirements of the student.

d.   External Examiners **should** be made aware of Faculty (or delegated School) policy on the extent to which students are supported by feedback on draft assessments.

6.3   Timely Feedback Deadlines

6.3.1 The following deadlines should be applied for all assessments. Academic Partners, particularly those with Validation Partnerships, are expected to adopt these requirements, however, they may adapt them as needed to take account of differences in term times or other institutional arrangements

a.   The University has adopted a policy that all students **should** receive feedback on all assessments in a timely fashion.

b.   Assessment feedback for mid-term assessments to be submitted **before** the last three weeks of term (excluding examinations) **should** be returned to students within **15 working days** (excluding Bank Holidays and University Closure Days) of the original submission date.

c. Assessment feedback for end of term assessments to be submitted **within** the last three weeks of term or immediately following the spring/winter vacation (including examinations), **should** be returned to students on the **global results day at the start of the next term**.

d. Assessment schedules **should** be considered to ensure that students will have the opportunity to make improvements in related future assessments on the same or other modules, on the basis of the feedback provided.

e. After marks and feedback (where applicable) have been returned, new submissions of the same assessment item, **should** not be accepted unless approved by the Faculty Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education (APVCE).

f. Where possible, Faculties/Departments **should** monitor the amount of time taken for assessment items to be returned, and this should be reviewed and acted upon as appropriate at module, programme, Department and Faculty level.

6.3.2 For undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes, which follow the dates published centrally by the University for terms 1 – 3, please refer to the following to support the setting of timely feedback deadlines:

a. The University-published term-time dates can be found in the Academic Calendar.

b. The University-published start of term coursework and examination results release dates can be found at Assessments | Student hubs | University of Exeter.

6.3.3 For undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes that **do not adhere to published term times**, it is acknowledged that the term 'working days' may need to be defined differently by Faculties and Departments, particularly where different academic year start and finish dates apply. Programmes and short courses which are not aligned to standard term dates may need to offer alternative feedback arrangements, where the global results day does not align with programme structures or PSRB requirements. These exceptions must be agreed by the APVCE or delegate, and the Assistant Director, Education Support Services. Examples of exceptions are given below:

a. **Degree Apprenticeships:** DA programmes are organised in different cohorts to support employer schedules, which makes a single results day impractical. Therefore, the 15 working day turnaround **should** apply.

b. **Online Programmes:** Online students **must** receive their feedback on a module before they register for their new module. Marks and feedback **should**, therefore, be released should be two weeks before the launch of the next modules.

c. **CEDAR:** The 15 working day turnaround applies, with an additional 5 working days over school half term and 10 working days over school summer holidays permitted.

6.3.4   If a student or students have been granted an extension via the self-certification or evidence-based mitigation processes (see Chapter 10 - Mitigation) the following adjustments to the timely feedback deadlines will apply:

a.   For mid-term assessments

i.   Feedback for assessments submitted by the original deadline, or following a one-week extension, **should** be returned to students within **15 working days** (excluding Bank Holidays and University Closure Days) of the original submission date.

ii.   Feedback for assessments submitted following a two-week evidence-based extension **should** be returned to students within **15 working days** (excluding Bank Holidays and University Closure Days) **of the longest extended submission deadline**.

iii.   Should the extended submission deadline take the extended feedback deadline into a vacation period, the feedback **should** be returned by the **end of the first week of the next term.**

b.   For end of term assessments

i.   Feedback for end of term assessments submitted within three weeks of the end of term, including where one- or two-week extensions to submission deadlines have been granted, **should** be returned to students on the **global results day at the start of the next term**.

ii.   Feedback for end of term assessments submitted at the start of the next term, should be released on the next global results release day. Feedback for one or two-week extensions should be returned to students on the next global results day or within 15 working days, whichever is the later.

Further guidance on the provision of timely feedback can be found on the University's EduExe Toolkit SharePoint site.

6.4   Data Protection

6.4.1 The disclosure to students of information about their performance enhances the learning experience, preparing them better for the intellectual challenges ahead both in their programmes of study and their future careers. It is best practice, however, to make results and feedback available by secure means directly to individual students.

6.4.2 This is in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018, which imposes a variety of obligations on those who hold or process personal data and information

including universities. The general implications of the Act for the University are summarised on its Information Governance website.

6.5   Release of Marks and Feedback

6.5.1 Marks for assessments and associated feedback **should** be made available by Faculties (or delegated Schools) or Academic Partners to students, once they have been agreed by the internal markers and moderators concerned, In accordance with the following:

   a. For midterm coursework submitted **before** the last three weeks of term (excluding examinations) marks and feedback **should** be released on the **15th working day** (excluding Bank Holidays and University Closure Days) of the original submission date.

   b. For end of term coursework (including examinations) submitted **within** the last three weeks of term, or immediately following the spring/winter vacation, marks and feedback **should** be released on the **global results day at the start of the next term.**

6.5.2 Where such marks form part of a final award or classification, disclosure **should** always be on the basis that they are only **provisional** and have no formal standing until agreed by the Programme/Department Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee (P/DAPAC) and confirmed by the Faculty Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee (FAPAC).

6.5.3 For examinations and other summative assessments undertaken close to a P/DAPAC during the early summer, provisional marks are not returned to students. Instead, marks **must** be held until they have been agreed by the P/DAPAC and confirmed by the FAPAC. Following this, they will be released to students. For PGT programmes that do not hold their APAC until November, examinations and other summative assessment results will be released to students as provisional, pending confirmation at the Autumn P/DAPAC and FAPAC.

6.5.4 For examinations and other summative assessments undertaken during the late summer Referral/Deferral Period, provisional marks **must** not be returned to students until they have been agreed by the Referral/Deferral P/DAPAC and confirmed by the Referral/Deferral FAPAC. Following this they will be released to students on the Referral/Deferral results day.

6.5.5 Marks are most appropriately released through the home Faculty (or delegated School). Marks for Flexible Combined Honours students **can** be released through a designated representative Department, if applicable.

6.5.6 Module marks **should** be disclosed as whole percentages, in line with approved University assessment procedures, except where an alternative scheme has been approved by a Faculty's Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education (APVCE)/Chair of the FAPAC.

6.5.7 Student handbooks **should** contain references to the status of marks released according to the timing of their release. Students **should** also be informed on how and when results will be made available.

6.5.8 All individual marks **should** be communicated directly to the student, via email, the Exeter Learning Environment (ELE2) or other platform approved for the release of results and feedback.

6.6   Access to Examination Scripts and the Provision of Feedback

6.6.1   Faculties/Departments **should** consider the following when facilitating the sharing of feedback on examination scripts. The nature of the assessment will determine the type of feedback that **should** be received. For examinations where sharing of examination scripts is not possible, please see section 6.1.2.

   a. **Online Examinations:** Where possible, examination scripts are released online to students alongside the release of their marks.

   b. **Paper Examinations:** Where possible, examination scripts are made available for students, either physically or electronically:

   i. **Physically**: Students can come and review in a secure location on campus, at a specific time, in liaison with their Hub / Info Point Team. The student is able to take notes, and where appropriate, photos of their script for their own personal use, and/or to discuss with their Academic Tutor (also known as Personal Tutor). Any discussion with their academic would take place separately, e.g., as part of Office Hours. Photos/notes can be used to inform these discussions. *Paper examination scripts will be available for students and academics to access for a minimum of 12 months from the date of assessment, before they are sent for archive. Students should request feedback during this time to avoid undue delays in accessing their scripts from the archive.*

    ii.   **Electronically**: Where physical review is not possible examination scripts are scanned, for example by the Hub Team, they should be electronically (and securely) shared with the student.

6.6.2   Responsibilities of the Faculty (led by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education (APVCE)):

    a.   Approaches to providing examination feedback, including access to examination scripts (post-marking), **should** be decided upon by the Faculty, delegated to the Directors of Education and Student Experience, to ensure parity for students.

    b.   Faculties **should** provide clear guidance for students so that they know how to access their examination feedback, including any information about access to examination scripts, where appropriate. They **should** also include guidance on how this type of feedback may differ compared to other assessments, such as coursework. Where a student will not be able to see their examination script due to system constraints, such as with Multiple Choice Tests (MCT), this **should** be made clear to them.

    c.   If examination scripts are made available to students, Faculties **should** endeavour to make them available as soon as possible following examination periods, in line with the timely feedback policy above. Students **should** be provided with clear guidance on whether any associate marks recorded on the script are provisional or final.

    d.   Any opportunities for synchronous group feedback **should** be scheduled at a time of day that is accessible for all students.

6.6.3   Responsibilities of the student:

    a.   The student **must** not remove or modify an original script; it is shared with them by the Faculty purely for their own educational use. Any breach of this will likely be considered under Academic Misconduct.

Further examples of appropriate approaches to examination feedback can be found on the University's [EduExe Toolkit](#) SharePoint site.

6.7 Examination Scripts - Data Protection and Retention

6.7.1   Notwithstanding the access that may be granted under the guidance above, under the Data Protection Act 2018 students may make a subject access request to the University Data Protection Officer for copies of their personal data held by the University. This

access extends to manual records (both existing and future) including comments entered by examiners on scripts or on cover sheets.

6.7.2   The Act also allows discretion to universities to provide access to examination scripts if they so wish. At the University of Exeter, this is at the discretion of each Faculty and/or Department.

6.7.3   Faculties (or delegated Schools) **should** ensure staff are aware that all students may access examination scripts as outlined above, and that any notes and annotations added to scripts will be seen by students who see examination scripts following these requests.

6.7.4   Examination marks are given a temporary exemption from the subject access provisions in the form of an extension, to ensure that students cannot use their subject access rights to discover their marks before they are actually announced. If a subject access request is received, the University is not obliged to respond until the earlier of (a) 40 days after the announcement of the results, or (b) five months from receipt of the request. Therefore, if the University takes longer than five months to process the examination results, it could be forced to make them available under the subject access rules.

6.7.5   Faculties (or delegated Schools) **should** also be aware that raw marks fall within the terms of the Act. Therefore, for instance, in the case of unseen second marking, both initial marks would have to be reported if they had been retained within Faculty (or delegated School) records (held either within a Faculty (or delegated School) office or by an individual member of staff).

6.7.6   Faculties (or delegated Schools), **should** note that they are under no obligation to retain scripts/remarks purely for the purpose of the Act (although they should be retained, as per the Data Retention Policy, where required, for appeals/complaints, for example).

6.8 Enquiries by Third Parties

6.8.1 Results/marks **must** only be released to the student concerned and not to parents or any other third party unless one of the following conditions applies:

   a. Explicit written consent (which **may** be by email) has been obtained from the student.

   b. The University is required by law or statutory instrument (as may be in the case of sponsors).

   c. Where required to prevent or detect crime.

   d. Where required to release to a third party who is sub-contracted by the University to process the data in a way that meets Data Protection Act 2018 regulations.

6.8.2 Sponsors could have agreements in place enabling the disclosure of a student's academic performance. This **should** be outlined in the Terms and Conditions for the Award Holders. If there is any doubt about disclosures, please check with the Data Protection Officer.

6.9 Academic Appeals

6.9.1 The procedures to be used when students wish to appeal against their academic results are detailed in the University Calendar under the Procedures Relating to Student Academic Appeals.

6.10 Transcripts

6.10.1 A complete transcript, including marks for assessed modules at all levels, **must** be made available without charge to all students after the completion of their programme and approval of award. Further copies will incur a charge. Transcripts will be issued by the University's Examinations Office including for students studying at Academic Partner Institutions where they have completed a qualification awarded by the University as part of a Validation Partnership.

6.10.2 Transcripts showing marks will only be made available to potential employers or other organisations at the student's written request.