

How can I get the most from my feedback?

All students will receive feedback for submitted assignments. This provides you with the opportunity to understand your strengths and weaknesses, as well as reflect upon improving next time.

Reflecting on the areas identified for improvement in your feedback is a normal part of the learning process, and will also help to build your resilience. How you change your approach for the next task will demonstrate your organisation skills and action planning.

There are two types of feedback. The first is formative which you might receive anecdotally from tutors as you progress throughout your assignment. The second is summative which is the more formal information you receive with your grade. This guide will discuss summative feedback, provide examples and interpretations of typical comments, and offer strategies for feeding your feedback forward.

Next time you receive a marked assignment back, take the time to look at your tutor's comments, rather than just the grade.

Most common areas of feedback:

1. How/whether the assignment addresses the question?
2. Analysis vs description
3. Relevance and use of reading material
4. Range of sources
5. Presentation; paragraphs, referencing, grammar, academic writing style

1. Does it answer the question?

- Make sure that the title is clear and what the question is that you need to answer. Check your interpretation with someone you trust.
- Plan your structure carefully around key points and apply examples from your research – mind map/bullet points.
- Keep arguments and sources relevant. Use the essay plan throughout the task.

2. Analysis:

- Make the significance of every point clear.
- Retain your focus on answering the question
- Stick to your plan throughout
- Ask 'how' and 'why' questions when editing

3. Relevance of sources:

- Plan research around keywords/focus of title question
- Read through sources, synthesise and evaluate relevance and quality before taking notes
- It is better to use fewer quality sources than crowbarring in lots of irrelevant ones

4. Range of sources:

- Use different types of relevant sources to show the depth of your research.
- Consider books, journal articles, radio interviews, documentaries, legislation, professional bodies, company information etc.
- Some tutors look at the reference list first. Make a good first impression!

5. Presentation:

- Proofread multiple times and improve
- Record referencing information as you go
- Check that the conclusion follows a clear line of argument throughout assignment
- Academic writing – learn from reading and develop a subject-specific vocabulary

Extracts of feedback given – consider how you might use these to improve:

1. You have provided a clear introduction, outlining the areas you intend to discuss in the essay. You could have included a definition of poverty to give clear terms of reference.

Avoid rhetorical questions as you are unable to address them

2. Analysis - what we were looking for was a discussion of how the law relating to your principle has developed. However, you seemed to write more generally about your principle without specifically linking it to the development of it.

You lapse into description rather than showing how the principle has developed. You focus on adequacy but say little of sufficiency. You need to explain how these link to the principle - did it extend or restrict it for example?

3. The choice of principle is sound but you took too wide an approach. The bibliography shows you have the ability to find the relevant sources but these have not been used to good effect in either the time line or the critical analysis.

Good points well made, but you need more evidence to support your argument. Consider examples of where this has been explored before in journal article case studies.

4. Bibliography - good referencing and in the correct format. Try and widen this to show your research skills and add depth to your essay

You must support your statements with citations from relevant literature

5. Analysis - this was good and covered the relevant points. You must check your written English as there were several errors.

It is clear that you have undertaken a lot of research and understood the key points. However, for your reader it is difficult to follow your argument due to the long sentences and lengthy paragraphs. Talk to Learning Development about your academic writing.

Tips:

- Always separate your own paraphrases and summaries from source material to avoid confusion and plagiarism
- Relevance to question – take the time to understand the task
- Read, think and evaluate *before* you start note taking
- Writing – proofread, get a critical friend to read it too as it should be accessible to any intelligent person at undergraduate level
- Structure - Have a clear sense of the overall structure
- See feedback as an opportunity and a conversation starter
- Don't let disappointment cloud your judgement – everyone receives feedback and the important element is what you do with it

More information

- [UMF grading criteria](#) - Standard marking criteria across the University
- [Reflection](#) – Tools to help with this skill
- [MyPAD](#) – Assess your own progress as a blog