

# Top tips for providing feedback

- 1. Start with a positive and encouraging comment.** Think about the impact your words will have on a student's self-esteem. We want students to use the feedback to improve future work, not to be so disheartened they feel like giving up.
- 2. Be as specific as possible.** "Good effort" doesn't explain to the student what they did right. Clarify what good performance is by relating to the grading criteria and marking scheme. "Not critical enough" doesn't give any insight into what needs to be done to do better next time. Suggest specific ways to improve the assignment.
- 3. Share standards.** Within your comments offer justification for the grade and relate your comments specifically to the grading criteria. Saying something is "very good" and then awarding 45% demonstrates inconsistency and is very unhelpful to the student. If there are vast differences within the same assignment, be clear about which parts are "very good" and which parts needs improvement.
- 4. Be constructive.** Turn criticisms into positive suggestions. Consider writing an exemplar sentence to show students what is expected of them.
- 5. Use appropriate language.** Use language that is understandable to students, given the level at which they are working.
- 6. Making feedback explicit.** Feedback comes in many guises; it is not *only* written down. Communicating to students when you are providing feedback in class, or in conversation with students is important.
- 7. Using questions within your feedback.** Asking questions of students within your feedback will help students to reflect on their work and identify their own areas for improvement
- 8. Feedforward.** Your feedback should help the student to prepare for, and improve future assignments. Identifying specific guidance and useful resources may help students to prepare for the next assignment. Unless a student has scored 100% there is always room for improvement. Suggesting follow-up work or advanced reading will help students to improve their future work from excellent to outstanding.
- 9. Mark the work not the individual.** It's the assignment that you are providing feedback on, not the person.
- 10. Help students to prioritise the feedback.** If there are a number of areas for improvement, summarising the most important points within the feedback will help the student.

