UCL

Helping students to understand assessment

Assessment & feedback quick guides

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Why do students sometimes struggle to understand assessment?

Students come to UCL from diverse educational cultures and need help to understand teacher expectations. Students who do not understand the standards they need to reach on a programme can dramatically underperform.

There are some easy ways to help your students through:

• Giving students practice in marking similar assignments and applying the assessment criteria

• Setting up peer review of assignments as a formative activity

• Designing peer assessment into the curriculum

What can you do to help?

It is best if you devise a plan to gradually involve students in assessment throughout their degree programme. This guide describes some activities you could introduce.

Guided marking and the other activities described in this handout, help students with diverse learning needs and diverse backgrounds to gain a better understanding of what they need to do to be successful on your module.

Resources

The Assessment Standards Knowledge Exchange, ASKe, at Oxford Brookes has a wealth of knowledge and advice on assessment and feedback:
 http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/

Paul Orsmond's guide to self- and peer-assessment in the biosciences has useful case studies:
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/teaching-resources/teaching-toolkits/assessment-feedback

The UCL Teaching and Learning Portal assessment & feedback case studies:
www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/case-studies/assessment-feedback

UCL Teaching Toolkits

Guided marking

Start early (at the beginning of your degree programme) by organising a guided marking activity.

This can be done on Moodle, or face-to-face with smaller groups.

Select a range of assignments from a previous year.

Ask permission of authors.

Anonymise and upload to Moodle.

Students use assessment criteria and comment on (and possibly grade) the assignments.

Devote some lecture/seminar time to discussing comments and grades and clarifying what you value in the assignments.

See the Quick Guide on Guided Marking for more information.

Peer review

This is a good follow-up to guided marking.

Ask students to produce a draft assignment and then arrange for them to read and comment on each others' work.

Again this can be done on a Moodle Forum (if you assign groups and ask students to peer review drafts from their group), or by using Moodle Workshop (contact Digital Education for help digi-ed@ucl.ac.uk).

Remember to follow this up in a lecture/seminar or online by giving your own comments.

Peer assessment

Students need to have practice in peer review before you try this.

If you feel your students are now getting expert at making assessment judgements, and are giving good quality feedback, you can involve them in giving feedback and awarding grades.

If you have a large group, anonymised peer assessment is possible.

Assignments can be uploaded to Moodle and peer assessed online; again Digital Education (digi-ed@ucl.ac.uk) will advise.

It is best to do this with 'low-risk' assessments e.g. an assessment that is worth a small percentage of the overall mark for the module.

You need to set up robust moderation procedures and complaint procedures so that students are confident their work will be fairly graded.

Collaborative assessment

Students get involved in designing assessment tasks, assessment criteria and marking and giving feedback on each others' work.

For this to work well, you need to ensure your students have a good knowledge of the standard of work you expect and have had experience in giving good quality feedback comments.

You can try this with 4th year students or PGT students.