UCL

Peer assessment

Assessment & feedback quick guides

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What is it?

Students grade and/or give feedback comments on each other's work. You can use formative work that does not receive a mark towards the final grade, or summative work which counts towards final grades and degree classifications. Examples could include group work participation, oral presentations, essays and lab reports.

Why do it?

Involving students in assessment is a valuable way to help them understand assessment criteria and academic requirements. Peer assessment can be especially valuable for international students who may have little understanding of UK assessments practice, and can also help students from diverse backgrounds transitioning to university.

Resources

Carnell, B. 2015. Aiming for autonomy: Formative peer assessment in a final-year undergraduate course. Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education. [DOI: 10.1080/02602938.2015.1077196]

Falchikov, N. and J. Goldfinch. 2000. Student peer assessment in higher education: A meta-analysis comparing peer and teacher marks. Review of Educational Research 70 (3): 287–322.

McConlogue, T. 2014 Making judgements: investigating the process of composing and receiving peer feedback. Studies in Higher Education. 40 (9): 1495-1506

Orsmond, P 2004 Self and Peer Assessment, guidance on practice in the Biosciences, Centre for Bioscience, The Higher Education Academy

UCL Teaching Toolkits

How to do it

Preparation

Good preparation is essential. Most problems with peer assessment arise because learners have not been adequately prepared.

• Introduce peer assessment and explain how it will help students. Without this justification, students might think they are just doing your marking.

• Good planning should also include 'low risk' or practice activities such as guided marking – where students mark and discuss previously-submitted assignments with peers and the teacher. See Guided Marking Quick Guide.

• Give guidance on how to write constructive feedback.

Feedback form

Use a feedback form to guide student feedback comments. See Using Proformas Quick Guide for an example of a feedback form.

Anonymisation

Where possible, ensure assignments are submitted and graded anonymously. Moodle Workshop can be used to manage online peer assessment. Digital Education can advise (digi-ed@ucl.ac.uk).

Rehearsal marking

For summative peer assessment, arrange both a briefing session and a rehearsal marking session. After submission of the assignment, distribute 3 sample assignments to the whole cohort. Discuss these samples either online or in a lecture/seminar and clarify any difficult content.

Moderation and complaints

All assessments at UCL must be robust and fair. Ensure that all peer assessor marks are moderated and that students are reassured of this. Set up and inform students of the complaints procedure. Following these steps will ensure trustworthiness of the feedback and it will build students' confidence in the fairness of the marks.