

# Teaching toolkits

## Preparing students for exams using feedback

Students receive feedback on their coursework that is explicitly linked to the skills and knowledge tested in the exams.

In other words, coursework and feedback may be regarded as an important learning opportunity that helps students improve and achieve better exam results.

### Educational benefits for your students

Students receive feedback that usually focuses on specific assessment tasks.

Although it is obviously important for them to understand their performance in the tasks, students do not necessarily find feedback explicitly relevant for improving their performance in the future.

With feedback that is forward-looking, or feedforward, students are more likely to engage with and act on the advice given by their teachers.

Feedforward is focused on the student learning and assessments that follow.

#### Definition of feedforward

Feedforward is 'future-orientated' and refers to feedback given by teachers that should either:

- be given post-assignment with more specific direction on how this can be applied to future assignments; or
- impact upon an upcoming assignment or exam.

Source: Sadler (2010)

## What this means for module design

Assessments are linked up, and feedforward is a teaching tool that connects the assessments.

Feedforward should therefore be designed and planned as an important teaching element of the module and should not be regarded as an afterthought.

It is obvious that teachers still need to comment on their students' performance in the assessment.

However, their comments can effectively be combined with learning materials that will help students learn and achieve better performance in the future.

## Feedforward can save you time

Teachers are likely to save time on providing more relevant advice to students based on their assessment performance.

As feedforward is a planned teaching tool with learning materials, the teachers' role is to link students' performance, and hence learning needs, to the planned learning materials that connect the coursework to the exam.

A 'feedforward database' with commonly-encountered mistakes and relevant learning materials is prepared in advance, thus saving time by not having to repeat similar materials that often require a lot of preparation time.

When new 'mistakes' are identified, new learning materials can be added to the database.

A database can take different forms, ranging from a modest Word file with text-based materials to sophisticated websites with multimedia contents.

## Introducing feedforward to your module

1. Identify the links between coursework and exams.
2. Identify students' common mistakes/weaknesses.
3. Produce a database with commonly encountered mistakes and learning materials that help students improve.
4. Make links to learning materials in the database when marking assessments.

## Where to find help and support

[arena@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:arena@ucl.ac.uk): contact the UCL Arena Centre

We have a range of assessment and feedback toolkits on the Teaching and Learning Portal, including:

- 6 key steps to develop good feedback
- Assessing group work
- Assessing students multimedia assignments
- Assessment and feedback resources
- Enhancing and giving quicker feedback
- Guided marking
- Helping students understand assessment
- Oral assessment
- Peer assessment
- Preparing students for exams using feedback
- TESTA (Transforming experience of students through assessment)
- Using proformas for feedback

**[bit.ly/AssessmentFeedbackResources](https://bit.ly/AssessmentFeedbackResources)**: to access an online guide for assessment and feedback resources.

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