BENCHMARK YOUR FEEDBACK QUALITY (Course or Programme Level)

The following checklist can work as a personal appraisal device, to gather a detailed picture of the strengths you bring and the areas where you wish to initiate changes or improvements. It can also act as a resource to identify and disseminate good practice; as a resource to identify problems and issues you need to address; as a discussion-starter for staff-development; or as a team resource, for a group of colleagues working together in order to co-ordinate consistency across the student experience.

Aim to answer all the questions but don't think you need to do everything on the checklist, just select the actions that work best for you in your local context.

Those individuals/teams whose practice is well-developed might consider involving students to give their feedback about how they see your work in action.

Before students tackle their assignment(s) do you/we…	I/we… do this often	do this when needed	can't yet do this	would like to be able to do this	don't intend to do this	don't need to do this	Action Plans or Comments
Provide opportunities in an assignment briefing session so that students can ask questions about what they really need to do?							
Enable students to undertake formative tasks with opportunities for feedback which helps them see how to enhance their approach?							
Let students see examples of work from previous cohorts so they can see what kinds of standard of work they are aiming for?							
Explain to students the purposes of feedback and how they should use it?							
Provide a copy of the marking scheme and help students see how assessors use it to guide their assessment decisions, perhaps using illustrative examples of work?							
Talk to students about commonly made mistakes and how to avoid making them in their own work?decisions, perhaps using illustrative examples of work?							
Introduce students to general guidance on academic writing, essays, oral presentations, dissertations etc. as appropriate?							

Before students tackle their assignment(s) do you/we…	I/we… do this often	do this when needed	can't yet do this	would like to be able to do this	don't intend to do this	don't need to do this	Action Plans or Comments
Show students selected elements of the Heriot-Watt assessment regulations so they understand the rules of the game?							
Offer students the chance to ask questions or seek clarification at the end of a lecture which you respond to collectively at the next session?							
Explain to students the purposes of feedback and how they should use it?							

While assessing: quality of feedback							
Do you provide a summary of your overview of the quality of the assignment?							
Provide a good balance of positive and negative comments so that students of all abilities can learn from feedback?							
Pose questions that encourage re ection that can feedforward into future assignments?							
Use different formats (e.g. audio) which help capture and convey your meaning?							
Write comments that are self-explanatory and don't need decoding?							
Provide specific information about ways to improve their work overall that can feed into future assignments?							
Explain how the mark or grade is mapped against the criteria and why it's not higher or lower?							
Offer dialogic opportunities to discuss the assignment and your feedback either in class, face-to-face or via the VLE?							
Do you ensure when writing feedback comments that they clearly relate to the assignment criteria?							
Is the feedback you write encouraging of positive future efforts to improve?							
Does your feedback highlight strengths of the work as well as highlighting what needs remediation?							
Do you ensure that the number of feedback comments is motivational rather than disheartening, since less able students may be put off by too many negative ones?							
Do you help students understand how to move the standard of their work up to the next grade boundary?							

Timeliness							
Do you let students know what date they should expect their feedback on an assignment to be returned?							
If your feedback schedule slips for any good reason, do you keep the cohort informed about what is going on and when they can expect their feedback?							
Do you provide generic feedback in class or via the VLE very soon after the submission date and before they can expect to receive their personalised comments?							
Do students receive individualised feedback within the specified timescale?							
Do you manage the assessment process appropriately so that it is feasible for all students to receive timely feedback?							
Do you use appropriate technologies (e.g. statement banks, proformas, etc.) to support your feedback?							
Do you use effective systems to standardise the quality and extent of feedback given by your team of markers to avoid accusations of inconsistency?							

Engagement							
Do you provide the feedback comments separately from the marks/grades so that students have a chance to read and review your comments before they can access the marks?							
Do you provide feedback in a variety of formats on different occasions, including for example, feeding back to the whole cohort in class, in 1-2-1 situations, through self and peer review activities, in lecture rooms using clickers etc?							
Do you flag up occasions when you are giving informal feedback that can help them improve their work, for example in studio critique sessions, problem classes, seminars and tutorials?							
Have you used students' comments from NSS, course review and other means to help you improve the kinds of feedback you give them? [If so, do you let students know how you've responded to student feedback?]							
Have you provided opportunities to students to tell you about good and bad feedback experiences they have had before they came to university so you can use this as a basis for talking to them about the Heriot-Watt approach?							
Do you have means of checking whether students have accessed not just the marks they receive but the feedback comments you have given them?							
Do you use any specific techniques (e.g. helping students create an action plan) to support students to understand and use feedback?							
Do you provide face-to-face opportunities to support students who you know are doing badly on assignments?							
Do you ask students to comment specifically on their perceptions of the quality of the feedback they receive well in advance of the NSS?							

Other ideas about what works?							
Do you have any other tried-and-tested approaches you could disseminate?							

ACTION PLAN

Now you have worked through the checklist, identify and note below three specific actions you as an individual or a team plan to take in order to improve the feedback provision in your course/programme:

1

2

3

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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