

Policy on assessment feedback

1. Background

This policy has been developed in accordance with chapter 7 of Walbrook's Code of Practice on assessment principles and chapter B6 of the QAA's Quality Code for Higher Education which refers to the assessment of students. Within the QAA's Quality Code, guideline nine stipulates that institutions should 'provide appropriate and timely feedback to students on assessed work in a way that promotes learning and facilitates improvement but does not increase the burden of assessment'.

2. Policy definition and policy aims

- 2.1 'Feedback' in this policy is used to refer to comments given by Walbrook's faculty to students on an assessment task. Throughout this document, 'feedback' is used for brevity, but includes both the concepts of feedback (i.e., sharing thoughts on the work that was submitted), and feed-forward (i.e., sharing ideas for developing / improving future work).

'Assessment' in this policy is a generic term for a set of processes that measure the outcomes of students' learning in terms of Walbrook's grade classification descriptors. Grade classification descriptors are available to students in a number of areas e.g., module Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs).

- 2.2 Feedback can be provided following both formative and summative types of assessment, the definitions of which are provided below.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment is designed to provide learners with feedback on progress and inform development. Formative assessment doesn't count towards students' final grade.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment provides a measure of achievement or shortcoming in respect of a learner's performance in relation to the module and ultimately, programme intended learning outcomes.

- 2.3 The effectiveness of Walbrook's practice in the provision of feedback on assessment will be evaluated via annual programme monitoring, the periodic review process, lecturers, moderators and external examiners.

3. Principles of feedback

3.1 Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning experience, and providing feedback is essential to enable students to evaluate their progress and improve on their performance.

3.2 Examples of ways in which feedback might be delivered include

- written feedback
- audio feedback
- oral feedback
- online assessment exercises (past examinations and summative assignments and specimens)
- online forum discussions and online blogs
- discussions with the lecturer
- presentations and webinar presentations.

3.3 Feedback must

- (i) be closely related to the intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- (ii) be provided in a format appropriate to the type of assessment and to the needs of the student, taking account of any reasonable adjustments
- (iii) be positive, supportive, and developmental, and clearly identify areas for improvement
- (iv) be provided within an appropriate timescale to enable students to review and act on so they can enhance their performance before attempting their next assessment.

4. Communication

4.1 Students' feedback is communicated in an appropriate format for them. It should be clearly available to students to see what method of assessment will be adopted and when results will be communicated. The agreed timeframe for the submission of assessed work and the provision of feedback should also be provided for each assessment.

4.2 Students should always firstly seek advice from their assigned lecturer if there are any queries around the feedback provided. The lecturer will have details of colleagues within Walbrook should they not be available to answer student queries.

- 4.3 It's of utmost importance that students are satisfied with the guidance provided and that queries have been answered sufficiently. Students who feel that hasn't been the case may discuss their queries with their Year Tutor or Personal Tutor, and / or the Academic Dean.
- 4.4 Timescales for feedback are communicated via the student or programme handbook and on the students' course website. These inform students of the maximum turnaround times for them to receive their provisional results and feedback. If there are any delays in marking due to any issues arising during the marking stages, students will be contacted with a new expected timeframe for results release.

5. Timeliness of feedback

- 5.1 Lecturers are encouraged to promote the formative assessments available so there is an opportunity to provide formative feedback on learning during a module in order to help students prepare for their summative assessment.
- 5.2 Appropriate timescales for the provision of feedback to students on their summative assessment should be established and published by Walbrook, and these expectations should be met through the planning of the schedule and volume of assessment. Feedback will be released along with the students' provisional results. These results will be ratified at the next Module Assessment Board.

6. Content of feedback

- 6.1 In addition to individualised feedback on each first submission assessment component, where appropriate and subject to cohort size, group feedback is published on the module course sites following the moderation process.
- 6.2 Feedback on assessment should contain enough detail to enable students to evaluate and improve their performance.
- 6.3 All feedback will be as clear as possible, to avoid misinterpretation. Any concerns from students will be dealt with promptly by Walbrook and the original author of the feedback is responsible for elaborating where necessary.
- 6.4 All parties providing the feedback should, wherever possible, provide group feedback to students on their performance in their assessment, which should

- i. include a general commentary of students' performance, including identifying common strengths and weaknesses
- ii. highlight those areas on which students' performance could be improved and suggest strategies for improving performance in those areas, and
- iii. provide students with 'feed-forward' guidance to aid their development.

7. Guidance and Staff Support

- 7.1 Walbrook must make it clear to students when feedback is being provided.
- 7.2 Walbrook must ensure that the guidelines and assessment criteria are clearly available to all students.
- 7.3 Walbrook must carefully consider the timing of the provision of feedback on summative assessment, and these timescales should be clearly visible to students in advance of the assessment being sat.
- 7.4 Walbrook is responsible for ensuring that all academics involved in marking and providing feedback to students are fully prepared for this activity. Clear documentation explaining the marking and feedback process is provided to all markers.
- 7.5 The role of feedback can be further enhanced in the learning process by the development of reflective skills throughout programmes, so that students themselves are prepared and motivated to make effective use of the available feedback.