



## Assessment & Feedback Strategy

  
*University of*  
**HUDDERSFIELD**

## **University of Huddersfield Assessment and Feedback Strategy**

### **VISION**

Our assessment and feedback will inspire and challenge students to achieve. It will be clear, accessible, responsive, professional and innovative.

### **THE PROJECT**

This project was born from the University's long-standing excellence in teaching and commitment to its students. The present document has been drafted as part of a HEA Change Academy process which involved both staff and students of the University. It aims to inform and improve the work of both our students and staff. Assessment and feedback have been areas which have provoked concerns in Huddersfield and across the sector reflected in areas such as the National Student Survey. This initiative helps to address those concerns, but its intention is wider, in contributing to the Strategy Map's goals in enhanced student achievement, employability and satisfaction.

The process will involve a number of small initiatives, but it also opens the way to a broader transformation of the culture of learning and teaching seen in assessment and feedback. The project will achieve this through an open process of consultation and formation over one year, which will allow colleagues to build on their considerable expertise and experience. Following some initial work in this area by many colleagues, the 2009 NSS rated student satisfaction with assessment and feedback seven percentage points ahead of the national average. The Change team believes that the University has the capability to be a national and international leader in this field.

### **THE STRATEGY**

This strategy defines a series of expectations with regard to assessment and feedback that apply to both students and staff on all full and part time undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses. It does not apply to postgraduate research students.

This document represents the first part of the strategy, setting out core expectations and values.

## **CORE EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

**This section sets out what our students can expect and the requirements to which we expect all Schools to adhere.**

The University will use reasonable endeavours to provide assessment and feedback as described in this policy but accepts no liability if it cannot adhere to these timescales due to circumstances beyond its reasonable control. These may include, but are not limited to: damage to the structure of University buildings, failure of computing systems, illness or industrial action of academic or support staffs. The University will, in the event of the above, use its reasonable endeavours to reschedule and/or make reasonable alternative arrangements.

### **1. Our students can expect to:**

- 1 know the criteria against which their work will be assessed and what they mean;
- 2 know how and when their assessment needs to be presented or submitted;
- 3 know when their assessed but unmoderated work and associated feedback will be made available (the hand-back date must be clearly published prior to the submission date and be within three working weeks of the submission date); this does not include examination papers for which separate arrangements are available and does not apply to other end assessments which will be available after the examination boards;
- 4 know what form their feedback will take;
- 5 receive feedback on every piece of assessment; this does not include examination papers for which separate arrangements are available and does not apply to other end assessments which will be available after the examination boards
- 6 for undergraduate students, at each of foundation and intermediate levels, receive formative assessment and feedback on at least one piece of work at that level of study that may be submitted subsequently as a summative assessment (the

formative work might, typically, comprise a plan, draft or annotated bibliography);

- 7 for undergraduate students, receive formative feedback on a final year major project or dissertation during the early stage (normally the second quarter) of the period of study. The principle in relation to feedback on the final draft of the document, prior to the final summative submission, is not that staff be expected to offer feedback on the entirety of the document but to provide comment and guidance as is deemed appropriate for the discipline
- 8 receive personalised feedback which is clear and accessible and enables them to learn and to seek further clarification;
- 9 have feedback that always lets them know what they can do to improve their level of achievement;
- 10 keep their assessment and feedback once it has been returned to them. For 'one-off' assessment, alternative strategies to manage such things as moderation and external examination should be devised.

## **2. Our Schools and subject areas should be able to:**

- 1 ensure they provide early low stakes assessment (which may be entirely formative or carry a small element of summative assessment) within the first quarter at each level of study;
- 2 provide and explain assessment criteria and feedback processes, before assessment, relating them to level and course outcomes;
- 3 write a marking strategy for graded modules to cover the entire grade range from 0-100, itemized by decile;
- 4 review the quality of the feedback they are presenting, both within modules and across the course, with course teams considering assessment and feedback in the annual evaluation process;
- 5 invite external examiners to comment upon assessment;
- 6 design modules that:

- a) encourage assessment that is continuous and iterative
  - b) minimize overlap of learning outcomes where more than one element of assessment is specified;
  - c) use marking that is criteria (not norm) referenced against the published assessment criteria;
- 7 provide evidence of assessment and feedback to students on all assessments;
- 8 track that assessed work and feedback be made available to the student at the appropriate time

**3. Our academic staff should ensure that:**

- 1 where a mark range appears to be clustered and/or marks at the extremes are absent, staff should reflect on this in module reports;
- 2 they do not provide dismissive, insulting, obfuscating, or demoralizing feedback;
- 3 they provide personalised feedback as well as a mark;
- 4 students are encouraged to engage with feedback, preferably in the learning environment (e.g. the classroom, or online);
- 5 they always provide feedback that enables students to plan effectively for future learning and assessment;
- 6 except in the case of end assessments, they always provide feedback as soon as possible and no longer than three working weeks (and in advance of moderation if this will slow the return of work: students can be advised that marks are un-moderated);
- 7 they do not breach anonymity of marking where it is required.

**4. The University will support this by providing all staff and students with:**

- 1 feedback and assessment guidelines and resources (e.g. handbook, brochures, website) for students;
- 2 appropriate and targeted training and resources for staff.