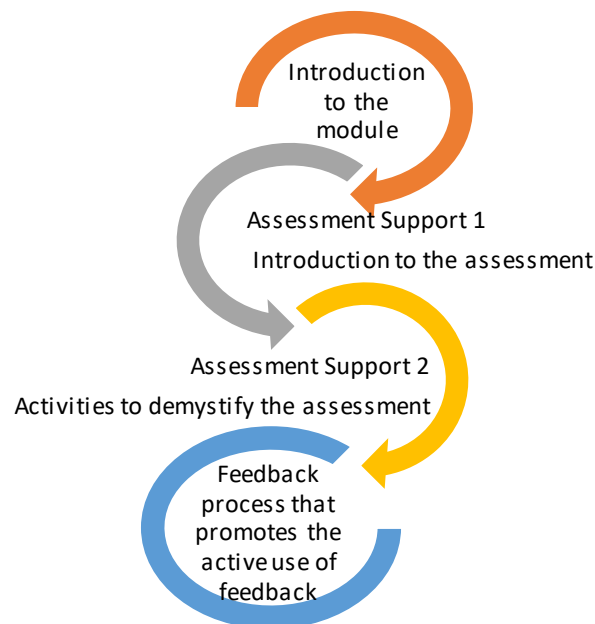


## Embedding Mental Wellbeing: Methods and Benefits Collaborative Enhancement Project 2021

### Approaching feedback with a growth mindset

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The Leicester School of Pharmacy deploys an assessment support and feedback road map across its programmes which is designed to help alleviate assessment anxiety by providing students with a route through the assessment process; to develop their understanding of assessment criteria, and what meeting them looks like, and encourage their use of feedback. A key driver for its development was the appreciation of the poorer mental health of those enrolled on professional degree programmes (Lewis and Cardwell 2018).



This example of how we embed mental wellbeing in the curriculum, which is being shared as part of the QAA Collaborative Enhancement Project, 'Embedding Mental Wellbeing', relates to the destination of our roadmap. We provide action orientated feedback on assessments but its effective utilisation requires development of feedback literacy (Carless and Boud, 2018). An important step in this is to be able to respond to feedback with resilience.

Students enrolled on science, technology, engineering and mathematics courses can experience a shift from growth to fixed mindset which is more evident in those who experience challenges on the course (Limeri et al., 2020). We have observed that some students look at

their assessment mark but not the feedback associated with it even when they are dissatisfied with their mark. We therefore wanted to seed an attitudinal change in students' perception of, and response to, feedback within our social-constructivist approach to feedback (Askew and Lodge, 2000).

We have introduced a feedback workshop for a formative assessment which supports a subsequent summative submission (location 3 on our road map) into Level 4 of our BSc Forensic Science; BSc Pharmaceutical and Cosmetic Science and Masters in Pharmacy programmes. For example, students received feedback on a formative laboratory report in a workshop where they were actively encouraged to use the feedback to improve their subsequent summative report submission. The workshops were co-delivered with a member of the Course Specific Initiatives team who led the discussion on approaching feedback with a growth mindset. The objectives of this part of the session were to consider why it is difficult to receive feedback, discuss how mindset and feedback are interlinked and to develop a toolkit for the constructive use of feedback. Learners had access to a Padlet resource on feedback for further support: <https://padlet.com/DMUdisability/feedback>. The sessions were deliberately targeted to Level 4 students to provide an opportunity to discuss the different types of feedback, receive actionable feedback and to reflect on their response to feedback. We embedded the content on response to feedback within the same session to highlight its importance and reinforce the academic viewpoint on the potential, and value, of learning and improvement as it has been reported that student's perception on their lecturer's view on mindset can have an impact on cohort performance (Muenks et al., 2020).

A key discussion point in these sessions is the way in which our emotional response to feedback can obscure its content; we may fail to take in key information when we feel angry or defensive. Naming this problem, and staff sharing their experience of having an emotional response to feedback they've received, helps to normalise the emotions that students feel when they receive feedback on their work. Feedback from students suggests that finding out that their experiences are similar to other students is a key benefit of taking part in this kind of learning. Additionally, by linking feedback specifically to its value in achieving a growth mindset, students are provided with a clear rationale for accessing and responding to the feedback they receive, and can see its wider purpose in terms of personal development, as well as improving their performance on an academic task.

The workshops highlighted that students understood the term feedback, and its purpose, but it was not always obvious to them when they had received actionable feedback. The addition of formative assessments was received positively by students as it allowed them to use the feedback received to improve their work. More than 90% of the Forensic Science students who engaged with the formative feedback received a higher grade in their summative report. When this approach was used with a formative maths assessment it also had a positive effect. On one programme it helped increase the average mark for the summative assessment from 45% to 60%. On another, where the summative assessment is recorded as pass or fail, the pass rate has increased from 60% to in excess of 85% since its introduction.

An understanding of feedback at the beginning of the student's university journey can help students engage with the feedback provided. Furthermore, the development of a growth mindset can help students dissociate the intended purpose of feedback for improvement from their emotional response to it.

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