



FEEDBACK GUIDE

“Making the most of feedback, for your future.”

Assessment and **feedback** represent two key aspects of the learning and teaching experience. The terms are often used interchangeably, but they are very distinct.

Assessment is the process used to determine the extent to which you have attained the required level in a piece of work or course. Mechanisms include multiple choice tests, examinations and so on. Assessment leads to a mark for the piece of work, which are based on your performance as compared to a set of prescribed criteria.

Feedback is the process of giving constructive criticism to you so that you can improve your performance in future assignments and assessments. Feedback ensures that there is ample opportunity to learn from errors, and hence gives scope for improvement. Feedback should also acknowledge and praise things that are done well.

What forms of feedback can I expect?

In the School of Chemistry, the following feedback can be expected:

Assignment	Outline of Feedback
Tutorials, Examples Classes and Workshops	In these classes, you will be actively involved in problem solving, critical thinking, and enhancing your understanding of chemical concepts. These are the skills that will be assessed in examinations, so you will receive direct feedback from the tutors - both verbally and through demonstration by example.
Laboratory Reports	Written comments highlight both strengths and weaknesses. In particular, these comments identify areas for improvement, where marks were lost, and how those marks could have been gained.
Online Tests	Practice tests give feedback as to where you might be going wrong by showing correct answers and reasoning. This then allows good preparation for actual online tests and written examinations.
Group Projects	Feedback is provided not only on the content of the project, but also on presentation style and the effectiveness of teamwork skills. Peer feedback (student-to-student) may also feature and can be particularly useful.
Essays	Written comments highlight both strengths and weaknesses. Essays may also be marked on-line using software such as Turnitin, in which case the essay will be annotated with comments. Frequently there is a summary feedback sheet which will accompany the marked work. The final mark awarded will correlate with the assessment criteria described in the course documentation.
Examination Scripts	Your examination scripts are available for inspection, but cannot usually be taken away - you should contact your Director of Studies if you wish to look at any of your past script books. Some Course Organisers hold examination reviews, in which it is possible for you to review how you answered questions compared to what was expected by the question-setters.



It can be seen that feedback takes many forms, and this is greatly dependent on the type of assignment set. Remember that verbal feedback given by your Personal Tutor, lecturers, tutors, postgraduate demonstrators, and peers can be just as useful as written comments!

How can you make the most of feedback?

First and foremost, do not disregard feedback. It is very easy just to look at an overall mark without looking at the detailed feedback that accompanies the marked work. Without consideration of the feedback, you are unlikely to understand where your strengths and weaknesses lie, or unlikely to improve your grade.

Read through all the feedback given and “decode” it. Every point made will have a purpose. Take each point into consideration as much as possible. Progress can be made if you take time to understand where you can improve. It is also useful to meet with other students to try and overcome problems together.

If I still don't understand, or want further help?

All you have to do is ask! Laboratory organisers, laboratory demonstrators, lecturers and tutors are all more than happy to help. Taking your assignment to them and asking for more information is welcomed.

You could organise a face-to-face meeting with the relevant person, or contact them by phone or email. In some cases you could talk to your Personal Tutor, particularly if you are having difficulty with the workload, or with assignments.

The School of Chemistry tries to ensure students engage in their studies as much as possible, from all angles. In response, they deliver feedback to students, enabling the development of good practice for all future years. It is up to you how much you use this; it is after all, for your own benefit.

The School aims to give feedback to students within two weeks of an assignment's deadline, providing the student has met that deadline.

If you would like any more information, or if you have questions or comments, please contact your Personal Tutor, or your School Reps on chem-reps@mlist.is.ed.ac.uk.