

## Feedback Policy & Guidance for Staff and Students

### Feedback to Taught Students at the RVC

The Royal Veterinary College is committed to providing timely, appropriate and useful feedback to students on their academic progress and achievement.

Good feedback is designed to guide student progress and can involve many different elements such as helping to clarify what is expected, responding to students' needs and/or providing guidance toward a deeper level of learning and understanding. It is a two-way process, an on-going dialogue between students and lecturers. In order for feedback to work for students, they need to engage with it and course-level processes should support them in this.

### Aims

1. Feedback must be unbiased, objective and provided in a timely manner; helping students understand the marks or grades they have received for the work submitted
2. Feedback must enable reflection on skills and performance; supporting students in closing the gap between current and desired performance
3. Students have a responsibility to consider feedback given on their work, to seek to understand it, and to act on it.

### Policy

For single pieces of assessed work constituting >30% of the overall unit mark, the maximum turnaround time for feedback is 30 working days after the final submission deadline.

All other formative and summative feedback on submitted work will be provided within 15 working days of the submission deadline.

Unavoidable extensions to feedback turn-around times require approval from the UG/PG Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning and must be clearly communicated to students in advance.

Feedback on coursework submitted after the submission deadline is provided at the Course Director's discretion, subject to the late submission policy set out in the College's [General Assessment Regulations](#).

## Guidance for Staff and Students on Formative and Summative Assessments

### Students must be made aware of the following regarding feedback:

#### 1. The exact nature of the feedback they can expect to receive on submitted work

- a. This information will be clearly communicated to students at the beginning of the course, year and module, including:
  - i. Details of the assessment criteria, marking descriptors and learning outcomes,
  - ii. clearly sign-posted opportunities for formative (developmental) feedback and
  - iii. clear communication of the RVC approach to feedback i.e. that it is an ongoing dialogue between staff and students which will purposefully evolve during a course, in order to develop vital self-regulation skills (planning, doing, monitoring and repair) so that students develop confidence and competence in self- and peer-assessment.

#### 2. The exact timings of assessment activities and feedback opportunities

- a. Module/strand leaders are responsible for making students aware of the timetable for assessments and submission deadlines as well as the dates on which feedback will be returned for each module/strand.
- b. Students should be aware of the exact processes and chain of events involved in the marking of assessments. This would include details of sample marking and the role of the module/strand leader and/or external examiner in quality assurance (including standard setting).

#### 3. The academic staff member responsible for the assessment and feedback activity

- a. The member of staff directly responsible for each assessment should be clearly identified in course handbooks, and pages within RVC Learn
- b. Students should be made aware of where to seek help with all other aspects of assessment and feedback e.g. Registry, Exams Office, Tutor, Learning Development Team, Advice Centre.

### Staff should be aware of the following regarding feedback:

#### 1. The feedback process

- a. At the start of each academic year the Course Director, or Year Leader if there is one, will inform students of the range of feedback opportunities available in that year and main goals of feedback at that stage in their studies.
- b. Students should be made aware of their own responsibilities regarding engagement with feedback (taught post graduate students have less time between assessments and therefore it is vitally important that they are encouraged to engage with feedback from day one).
- c. At the start of each module/strand, the leader(s) should explain how and when feedback will be provided. The handbook and/or pages within RVC Learn for each module/strand should have a clear section explaining the feedback mechanisms that it will follow.

Where?	What?	Who?	When?
Lecture and Student Handbook/RVC Learn	A description of RVC feedback policy and how it will be implemented on this course	Course Director, Year Leader and Module Leader	At the start of each academic year and module
Module/Strand Outline	A comprehensive list of the points within the module where feedback will be provided, and the nature of the feedback	Module/Strand Leader	At the start of the module/strand

Assignment Outline	Detail of the nature and timing of feedback on the assignment	Staff member responsible for the assignment	At start of the module/strand and at the time of assignment
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## 2. The academic tutor's role in feedback

- a. Reinforcement of the feedback mechanisms that exist on a course.
- b. Guidance for students in understanding and making use of any feedback given. In term one of all taught courses, time should be set aside to discuss with tutees their role in recognising, engaging with- and acting upon feedback.
- c. Attendance at specific training courses which will be provided for tutors as part of the academic staff development programme.
- d. Referral of any student persistently struggling in this area to the Advice Centre, Learning Development Service ([learningcm@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:learningcm@rvc.ac.uk)) or Academic Progress Committee (APC) for additional support.

## 3. Quality and parity of feedback

- a. Quality control of feedback is the module/strand leader's responsibility and will take place during the module/strand review.
- b. A global view of the student feedback experience should also be obtained and considered at both the year and course level during usual annual and periodic monitoring activities.
- c. Academic staff should be aware of the exact processes and chain of events involved in the marking of assessments. This would include details of sample marking and the role of the module/strand leader and/or external examiner in quality assurance (including standard setting).

## What form might feedback on your teaching and learning activities take and why?

### Formative assessments

- a. Formative assessments should be used to provide students with the opportunity to experience/practise any given assessment method prior to its use as summative assessment. Where possible, the marking scheme for the formative and summative assessment should be similar and there should be feedback to accompany this exercise.
- b. The assignment of a grade can be an important aspect of feedback for students and should be provided wherever appropriate. **However, really useful feedback should:**
  - i. identify strengths and weaknesses in relation to specific assessment criteria,
  - ii. offer guidance to the student on the state of their current achievement including
    - i. how to correct their mistakes and
    - ii. indicating areas for improvement (feed-forward).

Academic staff (especially tutors) should work with students to increase the value they place on such formative feedback, whilst at the same time reinforcing the direct messages that come from grades obtained.

### Summative assessments

- a. Group assessment tasks, MCQ and EMQ papers, clinical rotations, work placements, EMS, OSCEs, spot tests, oral examinations and written submissions such as long answers, projects, theses and case reports are ALL valuable feedback opportunities that should be harnessed by academic staff. Some summative assessment methods complicate feedback by the need to keep the questions secure. Therefore, feedback can be considered on a number of levels, with

the higher levels having a more rapid turnaround. Our target is to provide the first 3 levels of feedback (see points i-iv below) on all our assessments, and to be able to provide level 4 when it is specifically needed.

- i. Individual notification of overall mark and pass/fail or grade status
- ii. Individual section or question marks – a grade breakdown
  - This might be the top sheet of the spread sheet in which student can see their marks for the major sections of the assessment
  - It might be a mean grade for each ‘subject area/topic’ in an MCQ
- iii. Global feedback on assessment performance sent to all students such as
  - A set of example student scripts annotated with comments related to the sample answer and the marking scheme
  - Most common mistakes/most common successes for long or complex questions and for practical observations such as OSCEs
  - A simple list of the important points (normally applied to short answer/problem solving questions on the 0-10 grading scheme)
  - A feedback session in which the assessors hold a Q&A or discuss global feedback points
- iv. Individual student feedback
  - An individual line from an MCQ spreadsheet entitled with the learning objective for each question
  - A one-to-one discussion about performance in any form of assessment with a tutor or assessor
  - The availability of individual student responses marked or annotated so as to indicate the reason for their marks.

One-to-one feedback is often complex and time intensive and is therefore reserved for situations where other types of feedback are inappropriate or ineffectual or in areas of specific need. However in some situations, such as remedial advice to poor performers, it is essential. To facilitate this feedback there must be clear legible documentation of the rationale for the mark given for a piece of work. In particular this means that assessors must follow the guidelines on marking written scripts.

- b. Policy on viewing exam scripts and summative assignments should be clearly communicated to academic staff members and the student body. Examination scripts and summative assignments should not be returned to students. However, wherever it is feasible and helpful for students, to discuss their performance with tutors and with reference to marked scripts/assignments, College policy is that this should be facilitated. The purpose of such feedback is not for students to challenge the marks awarded.

Further advice and guidance on feedback can be found in our Learn module entitled ‘Academic Skills for Staff’: [Improving Feedback for RVC Students](#) (see section on feedback policy and tips documents) and [Feedback Conversations](#).

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