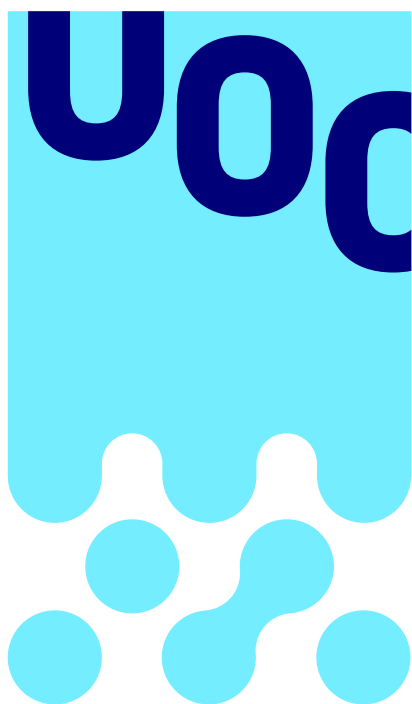


UOC feedback

Teachers' guide

June 2022



R&I

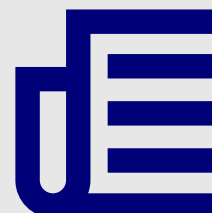
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1. The sense of providing feedback

In the teaching and learning processes based on the development of assignments that are planned in a continuous and formative way, feedback or pedagogical return becomes the educational support that allows students to know how they are evolving in relation to the aims to be achieved and the skills to be developed. In this sense, feedback is a key element of educational action, as it encourages students to reflect on what they have done well and what they have to improve and what they can do to improve, as well as how to implement these improvements.

2. How we understand feedback

Within the specific context of the UOC, feedback is understood as the mechanism that provides the students with information about their level of assimilation of the aims in the learning process, which can be within the framework of an assignment – CAA, practical activity, challenge or final assessment test –, or during the development of an assignment or project. It helps them to know which aims and skills they have already developed and which ones they still need to develop, to know what they can do to achieve this, to regulate and improve their learning process, and decide reflectively where to place their efforts. To summarize, feedback should be considered more of a process of dialogue between teacher and student, as opposed to a unidirectional process. Students should be able to clearly understand the steps to improve upon their previous efforts, as well as develop the skill over time to make best use of the feedback given. However, not every kind of feedback guarantees this improvement; it must be formative feedback, that is, not only corrective, but also suggestive, providing recommendations about how to improve the learning process.

Feedback gives the teaching staff¹ a more accurate understanding of the learning evolution and provides new indicators for complementing the content, the methodology, etc. With regard to assessment, the teaching staff not only needs to have information about the level of achievement of the aims, but also, specifically, about the degree of use of the feedback that they have given to the students. In this way, the content, type and intensity or frequency of the administered feedback can be adjusted to the real needs of the students.

Feedback is not just information that the teaching staff gives to the students, but rather, it is a process of dialogue and reflection that has four phases:

1. Generate and provide the feedback (the feedback can be generated by the teaching staff, but it can also be from a classmate or even designed by the teacher and provided in an automatic way);

¹ Generally speaking, we use the term *teaching staff* to include the different teaching roles at the UOC: coordinating professor, course instructor and member of an assessment committee.

2. Receive the feedback, read it comprehensively and decide on the improvements that will be implemented in the task and how it will be done;
3. Incorporate changes to improve the task or assignment
4. As teachers, we need to plan for specific times where students can demonstrate they have taken on board previous suggestions for improvement, as well as checking in with the teacher regarding any doubts or questions they may have moving forward.

This idea of a continuous spiral of the process of feedback guarantees its *formative* quality, a main feature of feedback at the UOC. The following figure represents this conceptualization of feedback.

Online dialogic feedback process

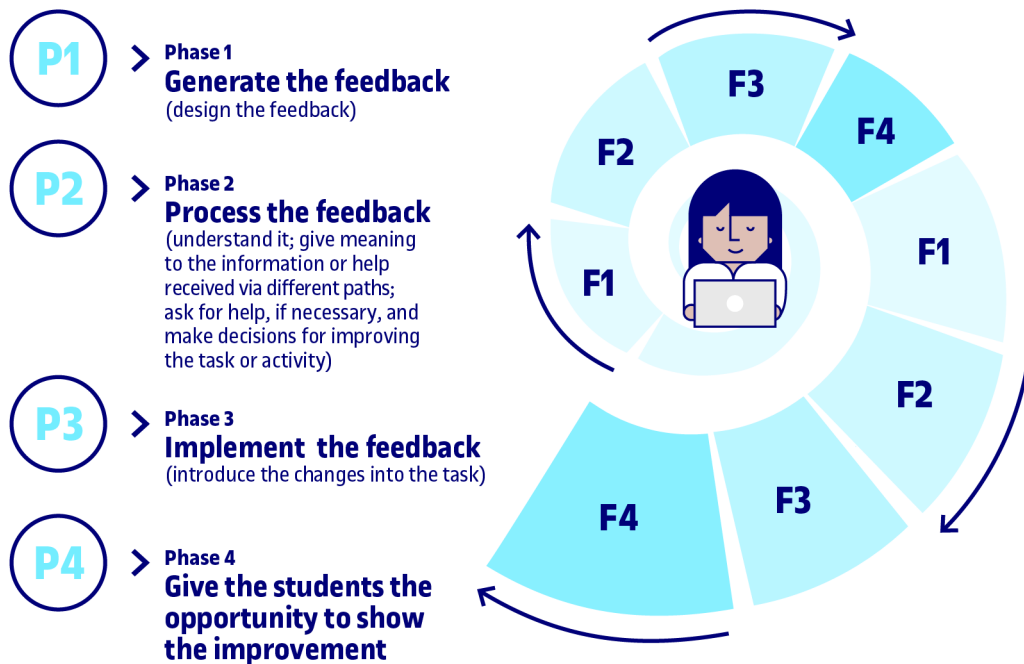


Figure 1. Online dialogic feedback process²

² Guasch, T., Espasa, A., Mayordomo, R.M., and Martínez-Melo, M. (2022). Keys for online feedback [infographic]. Feed-2Learn. Barcelona: Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (FUOC). Available at : <<http://hdl.handle.net/10609/143066>>.

3. Students and feedback

As we have said, feedback at the UOC is formative and therefore requires **students** to take **an active role throughout the process**. In other words, the students are not merely the recipients of feedback, but the assessments and proposals they receive (feedback) must challenge them and promote the incorporation of improvements in their learning (and in the current or future assignment). Some of the strategies to encourage students to take advantage of the feedback that they receive are:

- **Allowing the provision of the assessment criteria.** This strategy consists of sharing the assessment criteria with the students for the assignment being worked on, from the very beginning of the assignment. For example, a week can be spent at the beginning of the assignment so that the students can review the criteria, understand them, ask questions in case of doubt, etc.; the assessment criteria can also be identified and agreed on together with the students. These strategies ensure that the students understand what will be assessed and how it will be done, and that they keep this in mind from the moment they start doing the assignment. In short, we bring together the process of carrying out the assignment and the process of evaluating it, making it more meaningful for the students.
- **Communicating to the students what is expected of them in relation to the feedback.** That means explaining to the students what they have to do once they get the feedback. For example, in the type of feedback that is based on providing the solution, it is necessary to explain to the students that once the solution has been uploaded, they are expected to compare their assignment with the model assignment and, if they have any doubts about it, they should ask the teacher. Ultimately, it is about helping the students understand how to use the information they receive, and making it clear how important it is in their learning process. However, this strategy makes sense if it is accompanied by a pedagogical design that incorporates formative feedback, that is, feedback that promotes learning.
- **Providing feedback during the development of the assignment.** The main purpose of this feedback is to ensure the possibility of improving the assignment that is being carried out during the process. To make this possible, the students must be informed about those aspects of the work that are positive, but above all, about the aspects that need to be improved and how to implement this improvement. The students will take this feedback into account and incorporate it in the next delivery of the assignment. The feedback provided during the process of carrying out the assignment does not have to include a mark; it can be done, for example, by means of a suitable/unsuitable evaluation or with qualitative information directed towards improvement. The important thing is to cover the aspects that the students can improve and the explanation of how to make the improvements.

These are some strategies that **empower the students** in relation to the feedback process, giving them a much more active role. In short, what it does is **make the students literate in relation to the feedback** (what is known in research about feedback as “feedback literacy”).

4. Feedback characteristics

With the UOC feedback spiral in mind, it is important to consider the following aspects:

Involvement of students in the assessment and feedback process	Feedback is in relation to the assessment criteria of the assignment. For this reason, it is recommended that some time is dedicated at the beginning of the subject (or the assignment) to comment on the assessment criteria, so that the students understand and adopt them, and once they receive the feedback, they can understand and process it easily.
Inform the students about their progress	Feedback should allow students to know how they are progressing in terms of what they need to achieve (aims, skills). With regard to this, they need to have information about what they are doing well, what needs improvement, and how this can be done .
Focus on the learning process	The feedback provided is related to the learning process of the students and not to the person (value judgements should be avoided).
Motivate the students	Feedback should be motivating , encouraging the students to achieve their learning aims and develop skills successfully, whether they are students who are doing well, or students who need more reinforcement.
Orientate towards improvement	Strategies need to be implemented to let the teachers know that the students have received the feedback, understood it, processed it, and decided what improvements to introduce . Feedback is effective if the students use it, integrate it and implement it in their learning process in order to improve. It refers to phases 3 and 4 of the feedback spiral, which is related to implementation. Students must be offered opportunities to improve their activities so that they can integrate the feedback. Along these lines, it is recommended that the proposed improvements can be integrated into the same assignment or into future activities of the same subject (this is what we call feed forward).

5. Where we inform the students about the feedback

- The type of feedback that will be given must be specified in the **teaching plan or syllabus**: who will provide it (the teaching staff, a classmate (peer feedback), or the student him/herself (self-assessment); when it will be given, where, and in which format (in writing, via video, via audio, videoconference,³ etc.).

³ Given that the UOC's educational model is asynchronous, it is proposed that synchronous video conferencing is only used on a one-off basis and when it really adds value to providing feedback (feedback to many students, feedback to explain a concept, etc). It will always be essential to ensure that the students who have not been able to participate in the videoconference will be able to access that feedback in another way.

- In the assessment section of the assignment (or the document where you explain the learning task to the students), the **assessment criteria that will be used and the type of feedback that will be given** should be specified for each particular assignment.
- It is recommended to use the classroom communication spaces such as the **Board** or **Forum** to explain the assessment criteria of the assignment. From this explanation, a space for discussion can be opened with all the students so that they have the opportunity to gain a good understanding not only of what will be assessed, but also, with which criteria.

6. How we provide the feedback

The following table outlines the main **strategies for facilitating feedback** that have already been implemented at the UOC, providing a brief description of each, as well as some information that may be of interest to the teachers who wish to use them.

We make a special note of the feedback given to a **collaborative group** of a few students (not to the classroom-group). This feedback should be sent in the workspace defined for each group, and as previously mentioned, should include the relevant assessment based on the skills worked on in the assignment, and specified in the established criteria and indicators. It should also indicate those strengths and aspects that the group should improve for future activities.

It should be noted that these strategies **are not exclusive**, but complementary, and can therefore be combined with each other.

Feedback strategy	Description (who, when, where, and how)	Format in which the feedback is given	Recommendations	Advantages	To be taken into account...
General feedback to the whole class	Based on the correction of the activities and the results of the group, the teacher designs a general feedback for the class which includes an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses (what the majority have done well and what needs to be improved), and identifies key aspects for improvement. If the assignment is linked to a later one, these links are highlighted so that the students can clearly identify what can be improved for the next assignment.	In writing or on video on the classroom board or forum.	It is recommended that the learning aims of the assignment be related to the assessment of the positive aspects and the improvement aspects, so that the students can understand the individual assessment they have obtained.	The teacher, when analysing the results of the group, can detect the aspects to be improved and the strong points of the subject. The students can situate themselves within the group and see how they are doing in relation to their peers.	This is not personalized feedback in the sense of being individualized (one for each person), but it extracts the most common aspects of that particular group. Therefore, other feedback strategies will need to be used to deal with individual situations.
Self-assessment based on a solution, model or template of expected results	The solution of the assignment worked on is posted in the classroom at the end of the submission date. The students are asked to make a comparison between the published solution and their work.	In writing, orally, or on video, in the classroom space provided.	The solution should contain explanations of how the assignment is solved, not just provide the correct answer. Teachers need to plan actions to ensure that the students have done this self-assessment exercise.	It is suitable feedback for classrooms with many students. It is very suitable for single response activities or that follow a very common response pattern. It situates the students in relation to their learning process.	Taking advantage of the feedback is up to the students, who have to compare their work to the solution or template of expected results.
Personalized feedback to each student	The teacher generates specific feedback for each student according to the assessment criteria of the assignment. From a content point of view, it includes an assessment of strengths and weaknesses and provides guidance for improvement. If the assignment is linked to a later one, these links are highlighted in the feedback, so that the students can clearly identify what can be improved in the next assignment.	Continuous Assessment Register or personal mail. It can be oral (audio or video) or written.	It is recommended to establish a strategy on the intensity (frequency) of the feedback: it can be defined by basing it on the marks obtained by the students for the assignment (for students who get worse marks, to provide them with more specific guidance, or for students with excellent work, to congratulate them...), or by basing it on the number of activities (in CAA1, in CAA2...), or a combination of both.	It is best suited for activities that do not have a single solution. This feedback is easy to provide when the activities are written text, and the word processing tool can be used.	It involves a great deal of dedication on the part of the teachers, so the feasibility of it must be assessed in each case.

Feedback strategy	Description (who, when, where, and how)	Format in which the feedback is given	Recommendations	Advantages	To be taken into account...
<p>Feedback through a rubric (A rubric is a double-entry table where the rows represent the skills or aims to be achieved and the columns represent the different levels of achievement of this skill or aim.)</p>	<p>The rubric is an instrument that has different uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To inform the students about the assessment criteria: The rubric is shared with the students at the beginning of the assignment, so they already know what will be assessed and what is required of them at each of the different levels of achievement. To generate feedback: The teacher or classmate must place the work of his/her classmate at a specific level of achievement (<i>does not reach the minimum, minimum required, desirable, excellence</i>), so that he/she can easily know how he/she is progressing in terms of the aims or skills. 	In writing.	Teachers not only have to place the work done by the students in one of the development levels, but they should also inform them about what they have to do in order to improve and to progress from one level to another.	<p>Once the rubric has been designed, providing feedback to the students is very agile and the assessment is much clearer.</p> <p>The rubric is a useful tool for sending feedback to large groups.</p> <p>The rubric allows unifying and sharing the correction criteria among the different teachers of the subject.</p>	<p>A significant investment of time is required for designing the rubric.</p> <p>The rubric contains the assessment criteria, but does not customize the improvement actions that each student can carry out, so it is necessary to add this specification with individual comments.</p>
<p>Hetero-assessment (different assessors): students-teaching staff-assessment or external assessment</p>	<p>When more than one teacher assesses the work done, as an assessment committee or panel. It only applies to very specific subjects such as final degree projects or masters' theses with very particular characteristics, where there is a final assessment panel.</p>	In writing, orally, via video or Present@.	Clear coordination between the different assessing agents needs to be established, and common and shared assessment tools, such as templates or rubrics, should be used.	<p>It is a more contrasted assessment than that performed when there is only one person evaluating.</p> <p>It is based on the input of people with different profiles.</p>	<p>It requires greater coordination, and needs the necessary financial and technical resources to be able to carry it out.</p>

Feedback strategy	Description (who, when, where, and how)	Format in which the feedback is given	Recommendations	Advantages	To be taken into account...
Co-assessment: peer feedback	<p>The classmates provide feedback to each other (either in pairs or between groups). To decide who evaluates whom, the order of the list of participants in the classroom (each student evaluates the next), or any other strategy can be used.</p> <p>It can be done during the process of developing the CAA or at the end, depending on whether we want to strengthen the process or the final product.</p>	<p>In writing, orally, via video.</p> <p>In any classroom communication space or in the groupwork spaces.</p>	<p>The students must have a guideline with the aspects to be assessed (template, checklist or rubric).</p> <p>It is recommended that teachers have access to feedback provided by peers.</p>	<p>Students acting as evaluators learn when to provide feedback to classmates and work on critical thinking.</p>	<p>For the teaching staff it involves a management task that must be planned for exchanging activities between classmates.</p> <p>Teachers should review the content of the feedback provided by the classmate and ensure that the student being assessed receives the appropriate response.</p>

7. To find out more...

To find out more about continuous assessment and formative feedback, see the references below (sorted from newest to oldest). In addition, the UOC teaching staff are advised to keep in mind the **teaching support space** of the campus: the “Assessment” section contains all the updated resources related to assessment in the UOC’s educational model.

As well as this, the *Assessment guide* also addresses some important challenges in understanding the assessment of learning at university.

1. ESPASA, A.; GUASCH, T. (2021) “¿Cómo implicar a los estudiantes para que utilicen el feedback online?”[“How to engage students to use online feedback”] *RIED. Iberoamerican Distance Education Magazine* (vol. 24, no. 2). Available at: <<http://revistas.uned.es/index.php/ried/article/view/29107>>.

This article focuses on the strategy of rewriting an academic text (that is, giving students the opportunity to incorporate the feedback received and then resubmit the work) in virtual environments. The research results show that this assessment practice encourages students to use and implement the feedback they have received.

2. CARLESS, D. (2019). “Diseñar el feedback para promover el dialogo”. [“Designing feedback to promote dialogue”]. In Cabrera, N.; Mayordomo, R. (eds.) (2016). *Formative feedback at university. Experiences with the use of technology*. Barcelona: LMI. Available at: <https://www.lmi-cat.net/transmedia21/pdf/9_feedback.pdf>.

The chapter about D. Carless is especially interesting because it explains dialogic feedback. The book provides educational practices about feedback and technology (use of social media, feedback in virtual environments, etc.) that have been implemented in the university context.

3. BAÑERAS, D.; MARCO-GALINDO, M.^aJ. (2013). “Análisis del retorno personalizado en un entorno virtual de aprendizaje” [“Analysis of the personalized return in a virtual learning environment”]. In: JENUI, *Jornadas de Enseñanza Universitaria de la Informática* (pp. 85-92) [*Conference on the Teaching of Informatics at University*]. Castelló de la Plana: Jaume I University / Higher School of Technology and Experimental Sciences. doi: 10.6035/e-TliT.2013. Available at: <<http://hdl.handle.net/2099/15121>>

In this article, David Bañeres and M. Jesús Marco, lecturers in Computer Science, Multimedia and Telecommunications at the UOC, present the Rubrik tool that facilitates feedback and makes it more efficient through the use of rubrics.

4. QUINTON, S.; SMALLBONE, T. (2010). “Feeding forward: using *feedback* to promote student reflection and learning – a teaching model”. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* (vol. 47 no. 1, pp. 125-135). doi: 10.1080/14703290903525911.

The highlight of this article by Quinton and Smallbone is the instrument that they present and have used for ensuring that students incorporate, implement, and take advantage of the feedback they have received (phases 3 and 4 of the feedback spiral presented above).

5. GIBBS, G.; SIMPSON, C. (2009). “Condicions per a una avaluació continuada que afavoreixi l’aprenentatge” [“Conditions for a continuous assessment that promotes learning”]. *University Teaching Notebooks*. Barcelona: ICE of the University of Barcelona / Editorial Octaedro. Available at: <<http://diposit.ub.edu/dspace/bitstream/2445/7481/7/QDU13.pdf>>

This teaching material is aimed at university teachers. It covers the most important aspects of continuous and formative assessment, and provides guidelines on the characteristics that feedback should have in order to add value to learning.

Beyond all these resources, in the eLearningkit, the eLinC website orientated to the design of learning, there is a specific section on dynamization and feedback, with a selection of support resources:

<<https://kit.elc.uoc.edu/dinamitzacio-i-feedback/>>

8. Some tools to facilitate feedback

Comments can be incorporated into the same assignment that the student has produced. We highlight two tools about this:

- **Text processor**

It allows inserting comments into the text and thus provide personalized feedback for the assignment submitted by each student.

- **Adobe Acrobat PRO**

It allows inserting into the document in PDF format, not only comments in text format, but also in audio format. How it should be done can be seen in this link:

<https://helpx.adobe.com/mx/acrobat/using/rich-media.html>

There are also tools that allow the comments and suggestions for improvement, or the commented activities, to be sent through an application:

UOC classroom

1. RAC (Continuous assessment register)

This tool allows the easy provision of personalized feedback to each student. It allows for written comments, but also for attaching an audio or video file.

2. Present@

This tool allows teachers to record themselves on video and send it to the students. For more information about this tool, see the *Classroom* blog space (<<http://aula.blogs.uoc.edu/>>).

3. Langblog

The Langblog allows recording and providing feedback via audio or video. For more information on this tool, see the *Classroom* blog space (<<http://aula.blogs.uoc.edu/>>).

4. Blackboard Collaborate

The Blackboard Collaborate tool is currently in most of the University classrooms. It is a tool that allows synchronous videoconferencing. It can be used to provide feedback to students. If it is used, it is important to inform the students that the purpose of the videoconference is to provide feedback. The videoconference can be recorded and uploaded to the classroom.

5. Rubrick

It allows giving feedback from a default rubric, evaluating each of the indicators of the rubric according to the established levels and also, if necessary, adding comments to the actual activities of the students. The tool is not yet available in the classroom tools catalogue and, therefore, if it is wished to use it, prior preparation by the teacher will have to be done. The eLearning Innovation Center can be contacted for more information.

6. Folio

Folio gives the option of offering feedback to activities published by students in the open space of the subject, allowing that all students who have access to the public space can be enriched by this feedback facilitated to the activities by the rest of the classmates.

New Canvas classroom

The new LMS Canvas, which will be progressively implemented in the set of UOC programs in the coming years, also incorporates features such as a qualifications book and a speedgrader that allow providing formative feedback.