Feedback
a 'how to use it' guide
What is feedback?
It can be one of the following:
• Mark/grade given for an assignment/examination/presentation
  Comments given on quality and possible areas to improve within an assignment
  (this is called feeding forward).
But feedback goes even further than the comments associated with assessments.

Tutors
The most noticeable feedback comes from tutors; they will give you both formal and informal feedback. You may not realise it, but when a tutor gives you a model answer, it is to illustrate how the assignment should be completed and this is classed as a form of feedback.

As a student you might be able to negotiate with your tutors about what you would like feedback on; for example, you may want more detailed feedback on essay structure. Approach your tutors and ask if they could give you specific feedback where you feel you need it, rather than feedback on everything.

Specialist staff
For example, Librarians, Language Advisors, Careers Advisors, IT Help Desk, Technician Instructors, etc.

Here you will receive feedback on how to improve your information gathering, IT and practical skills.

Employers
If you spend part of your course on placement or within other areas of work experience, feedback will come from your employer/supervisor. Here both formal and informal feedback will be given on how you are progressing, and bring to light the areas where you may need to improve.

Peers
Peer assessment is becoming more common within the University, and therefore you may be giving feedback to, and receiving formal feedback from your peers; for example, on a presentation, how you worked in a group, tests marked in class time. You may also choose to discuss work informally with your peers; this is then classed as informal feedback and may help you pick up ideas on how they do things.

Yourself
Self-assessment is important to your learning, you need to look back at your work and judge how you are progressing. You also need to be able to identify the areas where you need to improve. You could be asked to hand in a self-assessment criteria sheet with your assignment; this will help you to reflect on your learning.

Electronic feedback
Computerised tests may be used, and you therefore may need to complete one/many for different modules. These are generally multiple choice questions and you will get immediate feedback on how well you performed in the test.

Feedback could be
- Written or verbal
  individualised to you
- Electronic
  e.g. multiple choice questions
- An assessment criteria grid,
  showing where you are placed against each criterion
- Model answers
- Check lists or pro formas
  e.g. headings of assessment
  criteria, with comments below
- ‘Off the cuff’
  comments from others e.g.
  ‘You’re really good at...’
- Written or verbal general to your
  class e.g. on some of the most
  common errors/successes
What should you do with feedback?

Feedback is there to help you with future assessments so:

**READ IT and USE IT!**

Read or listen to comments carefully ensuring you understand what is written / said.

**If not - ASK!**

Use your own judgement on how to utilize the feedback you are given. It is essential for you to find the most effective way of using feedback to build on your strengths, and identify areas where you may need to improve.

Here are a few tips on how to use the feedback you are given:
- Keep notes of what is said to you.
- Try to keep feedback sheets/information together; this will help you to identify common themes.
- Categorise information e.g. are there many comments on your referencing skills?
- Identify what you need to do to reach the higher standard.

Re-read your feedback sheets and any notes before your next assignment as some of it may help you achieve a better standard of work.
- Decide those areas in which you would like to concentrate on in the next assessment.
- Produce an action plan based on the feedback given to you, give your views on what is important for you to improve on (see example below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area to improve</th>
<th>Actions to take, including sources of help</th>
<th>By when? (date)</th>
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*This has been adapted with the kind permission of Rosie Bingham, Learning and Teaching Institute and The Assessment for Learning Initiative at Sheffield Hallam University*