Academic Skills for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships
How to Learn from Feedback

What is Feedback

- Feedback is an evaluation of your work or your working practices to help you develop yourself and improve your performance.

- It is crucial that you: understand your feedback, keep a record of it in a form that makes sense to you, and act upon it in order to make improvements.

- Tutor feedback is one of the most valuable resources available to students, particularly for distance learners with limited tutor time.

Two Types of Feedback

1. **Formative feedback** is advice on how to improve work and practices during an assignment

2. **Summative feedback** is advice (and a possible pass mark) at the end of an assignment, offering a final evaluation of your perceived achievement.

Areas Feedback

Individual written feedback on a submitted assignment is provided via *Feedback Studio* as an overall 'text comment' and as individual comments (numbered red circles) attached to the text of your assignment. All of the notes should be read carefully for both summative and formative feedback. Generally feedback tends to focus on three key areas:

1. **Strengths** – what was good about that particular piece of work.

2. **Weaknesses** – what undermined the effectiveness of the assignment.

3. **Areas for Improvement** – how to improve your performance

It is sometimes easy focus on the *weaknesses* while ignoring the strengths. However, all three sections convey important feedback, and should be

considered carefully. Tutors spend a lot of time trying conscientiously to give helpful comments, so please take advantage of them.

What are Markers Looking For?

Look at the assessment criteria for the assignment or module, generally there are four broad areas of assessment for written assignments:

Academic content – evidence of appropriate and relevant reading and research, coupled with a clear demonstration of understanding and response to the assignment.

Organisation – the ability to present material in a clear, coherent, logical, systematic and appropriate manner

Grammar, spelling and presentation

Academic conventions – such as using appropriate style, vocabulary, referencing and bibliographic conventions for your subject area

Using Feedback

Feedback, however uncomfortable (or disappointing) it may feel, is essential to your academic growth and development - do not ignore it. One way to approach feedback is to:

- Work through the comments and draw up a simple checklist of issues raised by the tutor. This is a good way of checking that you have fully understood what is being said; if in doubt, contact your tutor for clarification.
- Prioritise the list with the most serious issues at the top.
- Work out a strategy for improvements, starting with the most important issues – what immediate action can you take to show some improvement in these areas? Remember you are more likely to succeed in the long-term if you adopt an incremental approach – a little bit at a time – you're unlikely to improve everything in one go.