

Department of Philosophy

Departmental Statement on Feedback for Student Work

The Department is committed to the University's policy on feedback, including the principles of Adequacy, Timeliness, Usefulness and Fairness described in the University's *Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback* (available at www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/guide)

Feedback helps students improve their grasp of the material studied, and of the relative strengths and weaknesses of their written work and seminar contributions. This enables them to improve their future work, but for feedback to be of any value students must consider it carefully, ensure that they understand and follow the advice given, and seek further guidance if this is unclear to them.

With this purpose in mind oral feedback is provided in seminars, tutorials, supervisory meetings and Feedback and Advice Times, and written feedback is provided by seminar tutors or module conveners on all formative (procedural) and summative (assessed) work. Feedback, of course, can only be in response to student work - written work, discussion or seminar participation - and if work is not submitted, students lose the opportunity to benefit from such advice and guidance. Markers are under no obligation to produce feedback on work submitted late where no extension has been agreed, or work that contains plagiarism.

Formative work is returned to students with written feedback, either via the VLE or in hard copy; this offers comments on the work's strengths and weaknesses and how it might be improved. Such comments may refer to the Department's grade descriptors or (especially in the first year) to the guidance available on the VLE site *Beginning Philosophy*. Feedback on formative submissions may carry an indicative mark but this is less important than the advice on areas of strength and weakness, and guidance on how work may be improved. Both mark and feedback carry the proviso that higher standards are expected in summative assessment.

While summative work is not returned, written feedback is provided on both exams and essays, again either in hard copy or via the VLE. For some assessments (e.g. the summative examination for *Reason and Argument*) detailed feedback may be inappropriate; in these cases students will receive at least a breakdown of marks by topic. At present much written feedback goes uncollected and this represents a lost opportunity to learn, and to benefit from academic guidance.

Where practicable the department will offer students supervised access to marked examination scripts to help them better understand the advice received. This may not be possible in the case of secure papers.

Tutors often have large quantities of written work to mark. In every case feedback will be provided in good time for students to benefit from this before submitting assessed work, and tutors will advise when feedback will be available. Where possible, we aim to provide written feedback on formative work within two weeks of submission. In the case of Pathways, due to the quantity of work submitted feedback is provided within four weeks (earlier in the case of Block 4). Feedback on all summative work is available within six weeks of submission, in line with University policy; this allows time for second marking or moderation and for marks to be recorded.

Students may meet those responsible for feedback during their Feedback and Advice Time to discuss the advice received and seek further guidance, and discussion of feedback forms part of termly supervision meetings.

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