

Feedback Traffic Light Process – Monitoring Feedback Return Timeliness for Taught Students

An important aspect of delivering quality and timely feedback to students is ensuring feedback return rates are monitored methodically in departments with clear ownership and oversight. This document is an addendum to the [Academic Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students policy](#) and serves to outline the process which departments are expected to follow to ensure appropriate feedback monitoring is put in place to ensure taught students receive timely feedback.

The Feedback Traffic Light process which originated in the Life Sciences department has been identified as exemplary practice at Imperial College. This policy addendum advocates a series of steps outlining how departments could manage and monitor feedback return from staff to students based upon the pilot in Life Sciences.

Recommended steps

The following process steps are considered necessary to support an effective Feedback Traffic Light monitoring system:

1. Departments should set their departmental norms for the return of academic feedback - this may include differing timescales for differing types of assessment (e.g. coursework within 10 working days, feedback for examinations within 20 working days). In setting departmental norms consideration should be given to workload that ensure that strategies adopted to provide feedback are sustainable and support the student experience.
2. Departments/programmes should publish deadlines (date and time) for the submission of all assessments at the beginning of each term. Alongside this departments/programmes should also publish the dates on which feedback will be returned. It should also be made clear to students which pieces of assessment (if any) they can expect to receive their provisional marks.
3. Summative assessment dates (i.e. examination dates and coursework submission dates) should be collated in a departmental database from which a list of feedback return dates can be determined as per the departmental norms. Any changes made to these deadlines should be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies/Director of Postgraduate Studies (or equivalent) and communicated to students.
4. Departments should determine how best to provide feedback to students on their performance in examinations and other pieces of summative assessment, e.g. undergraduate projects or postgraduate dissertations, which are taken towards the end of the academic year. Students must still be informed in advance of the arrangements for the provision of feedback on these assessments.
5. Rules should be developed based on the feedback return dates to establish a Traffic Light monitoring system using colour coding to track feedback return. The following rules should be applied in the following circumstances:

- a. Feedback returned early should be coloured as blue in the database
 - b. Feedback returned on time should be coloured as green in the database
 - c. Feedback returned late (feedback provided after the agreed return date where no notification of delay has been provided) should be coloured as red in the database
6. Departments are responsible for updating their database throughout the academic year and are obliged to liaise with academics in the following circumstances:
 - a. Sending regular reminders to academics that have not returned feedback 4 days before and then 1 day before the feedback return deadline.
 - b. Emailing academics who fail to meet the departmental norms copying in the DUGS, DPS, Year Coordinator, Programme Director and/or other relevant departmental members.
 7. The Traffic Light approach enables departments to identify which module leaders are returning feedback late to students. Academics who repeatedly return work late should be contacted by the appropriate departmental officer and be expected to provide reasoning. Late feedback return should be communicated to those students concerned via email, specifying how long the delay will be.
 8. Having central oversight from the department allows systemic issues with coursework/examination timetabling to be identified, including the unnecessary clumping together of deadlines.
 9. Departmental arrangements for the provision of feedback should be overseen by the Faculty Education Committee (FEC). This should be a standing item on FEC agenda. As part of their consideration of the timeliness of academic feedback the FECs should also reflect on Annual Monitoring Reports, student surveys and action plans (e.g. NSS, SOLE, PTES) and other evidence.
 10. The timeliness of academic feedback should also be a standing item on Staff-Student Committee (SSC) agendas.

Optional steps

It is left up to individual departments to consider how overall feedback performance is communicated and publicised. For example, departments can choose to publish the colour-coded feedback return dates in public domains where students and staff have access e.g. on departmental screens, Blackboard etc. Departments should avoid “naming and shaming” individual members of staff.

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Notes and latest changes:			