Alternative Format: Focus on Feedback

Landing Page

Welcome and thank you for accessing this toolkit which has been designed to help support you with your academic skills development during your time at Edge Hill.

Click 'Get Started' to start the toolkit from the beginning or alternatively select the most relevant heading(s), from the contents below.

We recommend completing the sections in order, but you are welcome to work through this toolkit in the way that suits you best.

Accessibility

Our commitment to accessibility

As an Edge Hill student you are part of an incredibly diverse learning community. As part of our ongoing commitment to ensure an equitable and inclusive learning experience for all students, we have placed accessibility at the heart of UniSkills support, which enables all students to participate.

Alternative Formats

This is an alternative format for the Focus on Feedback.

Welcome from UniSkills

"Hello, we are the Student Engagement team – otherwise known as UniSkills! We are the people you'll meet (in real life and online) through various support channels, as we help you develop your academic skills while studying at Edge Hill University. Later in the toolkit you will have the opportunity to explore our wider support, but this is your chance to find out more about the team"

Access the video below to hear more about UniSkills and how to use this toolkit from our friendly Student Advisor. Alternatively, you are welcome to access the transcript as a **Word version** or **PDF version.**

How this toolkit can help

Access this short video**,** featuring one of our friendly academic skills advisors, who will tell you more about why academic writing is important. Alternatively, you are welcome to access the transcript as a **Word version** or **PDF** version.

Top tip: Already received some **assignment feedback or wish to jump to a specific word or phrase** within this toolkit? You can click on the **magnifying glass** in the top left-hand corner of the navigation panel to access a search box, **search for key terms** and learn more about that skill. Depending on the device you are using to access the toolkit, and whether you are in portrait or landscape mode, you might need to click on the 3 lines '≡' in the top left-hand corner of your device to access the search box instead.

Alternative Format: Focus on Feedback

How this toolkit can help

Academic Feedback is an essential part of developing your academic skills at university. We know that receiving feedback - both your **grade** and the **comments** - can sometimes feel daunting. This toolkit aims to support you in understanding why **engaging** with your feedback is important, how to harness any challenging **emotions** positively and help you identify common feedback **themes.**

Access this short video, featuring one of your friendly Academic Skills Advisors, who will tell you more about why **taking time to understand and action assessment feedback** is so important. Alternatively, you are welcome to access the **transcript** as a Word version(opens in a new tab) or PDF version(opens in a new tab).

Upon completion of this toolkit, you will have developed the skills to:

1. Understand the **purpose** of feedback at university and the various ways in which you might receive it
2. Learn from common **feedback themes**
3. Respond to feedback constructively and take **positive action**

Completing this toolkit supports the following **graduate attributes:**

1. Digital Proficiency
2. Personal Skills
3. Resilience

The purpose and function of feedback

What is the purpose and function of feedback at university?

Feedback is one of the most valuable parts of your learning journey at university. It's designed not just to assess your work, but to guide your **development** as a learner.

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Through feedback, your tutors will **highlight** what you're doing **well**, point out areas that need **improvement**, and suggest **strategies** for building on your **strengths**.

The purpose of feedback goes beyond just a grade or a mark — effective feedback helps you understand **academic expectations,** develop your **thinking,** and become more **independent** and **reflective** in your approach to study.

When used well, feedback becomes a tool for **continuous improvement** and academic success!

There are many ways we can define feedback. What do you think of the following definition? Does it summarise what feedback means to you?

"Feedback is any kind of information that someone gives you about your performance, skills and understanding, and can represent one of the best opportunities for improving".

Winstone, N. and Nash, R. (2016) The Developing Engagement with Feedback Toolkit (DEFT). Higher Education Academy. Available at: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/developing-engagement-feedback-toolkit-deft (Accessed: 10 October 2025).

Feedback on assignments is designed to:

1. **Support your learning** - helping you understand what you did well and where you can improve in the future (feeding forward)
2. **Encourage self-reflection and agency** – helping you take responsibility for building on your strengths, addressing any areas that need development, and becoming an active learner
3. Help you **improve** both your **subject knowledge** and your **academic skills** (writing style, referencing, critical thinking)

Understanding feedback as an academic skill:

During your university study you may come across the term **assessment literacy** which refers to how you understand assessments, their purpose and how they are measured.

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Feedback literacy is a specific element of assessment literacy and refers to how you process the range of feedback given to you by your tutors and how you use it to improve your learning. Feedback literacy is a skill you will develop throughout your time at university.

Remember, feedback is not personal. Your assessments will be measured against **learning outcomes**. Learning outcomes describe what you should know, understand, and be able to do by the end of a module, course, or programme. They make clear what your tutors expect you to achieve and help you see how your learning, assessments, and feedback all connect.

The following short video is presented by Damien Shortt, Associate Head of Department in the Faculty of Education.

Damien outlines how feedback from academic tutors can be delivered at university and will prepare you for the next section of this toolkit, the format of feedback.

Video Link: https://edgehill.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=501682a3-999b-499a-994f-b38300fe81bd&start=4.216558

Student view: *'Your tutors are on your side! It is important to realise that your tutors are not writing feedback to demotivate or annoy you, but rather they're aiming to guide you in the right direction, they're the experts!*
Lauren, Year 3 BA (Hons) Media

The format of feedback

Throughout your course of study, you will receive feedback from course tutors, personal tutors, or even your peers.

Whatever form it comes in, academic feedback is designed to help you **develop** as a student, so it is worth taking the time to read, process, and act upon it.

When might you receive feedback?

Feedback can include **informal** suggestions or advice during lectures, seminars, and personal tutor meetings, or it can mean the **formal** comments on a piece of assessment. Toggle between the tabs below to **find out more** about the differences between **formative** and **summative** feedback.

Formative feedback

Formative feedback usually occurs **throughout** your course. This may come as part of feedback for work that is not being marked or graded, or as feedback on a draft version of your work.

This can be **informal advice and guidance** which you may receive when discussing with tutors, or **comments** provided on a written **draft** of your assignment.

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If you are able to submit a draft piece of writing, prior to your final submission date, this is a great **opportunity** to receive formative feedback. Finding out what you're doing well, and what you can improve upon will help hone your writing skills and make your final submission as good as it can be.

Take time to **review** any formative feedback you receive and **action** the comments prior to your final submission.

Summative feedback

Summative feedback is usually provided once your work has been formally assessed and graded.

Most of us will want to know our grade first, to determine how well we have done, but remember **not to** ignore the comments!

These comments will help you **develop** your academic skills and **improve** further for your next assignment submission.

It is well worth taking the time to **read and understand** your feedback and make a **plan** on what you need to focus on next.

Who might you receive feedback from?

Feedback from your **academic tutor** or **seminar leader** is common and expected. You may also receive feedback from **peers**, depending upon your course of study. Peer feedback is where students share drafts, and comment on each others' work.

Whilst initially it might feel daunting to share your work with other students, it encourages you to **think critically** and **compassionately**. It supports you to recognise marking criteria, and how to identify if they have been met. Once you are able to do this for others, you can also develop this skill to assess your own work.

Feedback formats

The format of feedback may differ across your modules as not all tutors provide feedback in the same way. Work through the section below to find out about some of the **alternative formats** you may receive your feedback in, and how to get the most out of them.

Your feedback may come in a range of formats. Mostly commonly academic feedback is **written;** however, you may also receive it in other formats including **verbal** and **digital**.

Written feedback

Written feedback may occur as:

- In-text comments on your assignment, report, presentation, or dissertation

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- Summative feedback, highlighting strengths and weaknesses and offering guidance
- Grading against a rubric or marking criteria to note how you performed in each category

Written feedback is a **permanent**, structured record that you can revisit whenever you need to.

Verbal feedback

Verbal feedback may occur during:

- Personal tutor meetings (one-to-one)
- Discussions during lectures or seminars (group)
- Practical sessions e.g., corrections for specific clinical skills

Verbal feedback is **immediate**, interactive, and allows you to **ask questions** or **clarify points**.

Digital feedback

Digital feedback may come in the form of:

- An audio voice note commenting on your work
- A screen-recorded video highlighting strengths and areas for improvement within your work
- Online feedback (e.g. via Turnitin) for a whole group/module

Audio and video feedback is a more **personal** and engaging way to receive comments on your work. Online feedback for a group is an **efficient** way of disseminating the same or similar content or highlighting common mistakes.

Summary

Regardless of the format your feedback comes in, following these 3 steps will help you to get the most out of it:

1. Take time to read / listen carefully to your feedback
2. Engage with the feedback, and consider what you might need to do next
3. Act upon it!

Feedback types

Feedback may be **individualised** specifically for you or may be **general** and geared towards the whole module or seminar group.

Individual feedback is designed to focus on your performance, strengths and areas for growth. For example:
- Your assignment grade (how well you have done marked against specific grading criteria)
- In-text and final written comments (to highlight strengths and identify specific areas for improvement)

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- Feedback specific to Learning Outcomes (LOs) (to identify where and how LOs have or have not been met)
- Feed-forward suggestions (things to work on to develop your academic skills)

General feedback often highlights patterns across whole group, for example:

- Within assignment guidance (e.g., to highlight a group's overall strengths/weaknesses from previous work before starting a new assignment)
- During a lecture or seminar (e.g., a discussion which covers areas of concern with a whole group)
- Notifications on the VLE (Blackboard) (e.g., to summarise common errors after a practical lab session)
- Email to your module group (e.g., to highlight where a whole group has the same/similar feedback)

This section has covered **when** you might receive feedback, **who** that might be from, the **format** it might come in, and the **type of feedback** you might receive. Receiving feedback can be an emotional experience. Move on to the next section to find out more about **managing your emotions** around academic feedback.

Here are examples of individualised **personal** feedback, and **general** feedback.

Personal Examples:
- Your argument is clear and well structured.
- Draw upon a range of sources rather than basing your point on a single article.
- Developing critical analysis skills will help improve your academic writing.
- Remember to maintain eye contact with your patient during their assessment.
- Your presentation was good, but slowing down your speech would improve coherence.

General Examples:
- This cohort's knowledge of current National Curriculum guidance is solid.
- Many of you lost marks for inconsistent referencing.
- Some students struggled to identify appropriate clinical interventions.
- Many of you used description rather than critical analysis in your essays.
- Some lab reports lacked clear headings.
- The majority of assignments were underpinned with quality academic literature.

Student view: *'Remember it is good to welcome feedback with open arms as this is what helps you develop and grow as your studies progress. Awareness of your strengths and weaknesses is always a good thing as you progress through university'.*
Lauren, Year 3 BA (Hons) Media

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Emotional responses to feedback

Feedback and emotions

Receiving feedback - especially if it is not what you hoped for - can be a very emotional experience. But it is important to recognise that this **emotional reaction** is part of the **feedback process**.

How you deal with these emotions, can however potentially impact on how well you deal with the feedback (or not!).

Strengthening your **resilience skills** can help you to take control of your emotions and harness the power of your feedback.

Dealing with negative emotions

Not all feedback you receive will be positive, and there will be times when you may find it challenging. Ironically, it is the challenging feedback which will help you grow and develop your academic skills if you are able to reframe any negative emotions.

Tips for managing negative emotions when receiving feedback:

- Allow yourself to full experience your emotions (upset, anger, sadness, etc.)
- Take time away from the feedback and allow some distance to process your feelings
- Return to the feedback when you feel able to take a growth mindset approach
- Reflect on the feedback and try to explore the reasons why it may have been given
- Identify what you can do differently next time to avoid the same outcome, and seek support and guidance from your tutors if you need it

Activity: Play the video below, as Dr Phillip Dawson discusses some enlightening research about how we can work positively with our emotions and employ useful **strategies** when dealing with feedback.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfG-q_A8oGk&feature=youtu.be

Activity: Having played the video above, what strategies do you think might work for you when dealing with your emotions and feedback? Why not write down some ideas you can take from this video when working with your own feedback?

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Reframing negative emotions

It is not uncommon to find criticism difficult to take, but it can help to view challenging comments in the manner in which they have been given - as **constructive criticism**.

But what does this mean? Constructive criticism should helpfully state areas in which you can improve and develop, providing **advice** or **signposting** to ways in which to do this.

Heightened emotions

It's totally normal to feel upset, sad or even angry if you receive feedback, you're not happy with. It's okay to feel these **heightened emotions** and remember to be **kind** to yourself.

Use emotions positively

Once you've experienced any emotional response, give yourself some time to **reframe your emotions**. What may initially feel like a setback can be the starting point to developing your skills further.

Be compassionate with yourself

The messages we give ourselves really does matter, and our internal monologue can either help or harm how we react to feedback. Try and communicate to yourself in the same way you would to a friend - offering **supportive words** and **focusing on the positives**. Remember to think about what you are doing well, alongside the things you want to improve upon.

React, but return to reflect

Give yourself space and take some time out after receiving your feedback. This is useful whether you are happy with what has been said, or not. Try going for a walk, watching a favourite tv show, or spending time with friends - choose what works for you. This is key to allowing yourself time away from the feedback, before returning to **reflect and consider** how to move forward.

Feedback is not personal

Whilst it may not originally feel like it, feedback is designed to be constructive and help you improve. Discuss with tutors if you are unsure what comments may mean to gain a **better insight** on what you can **improve** upon next time.

Summary

If engaged with in a constructive and positive way, feedback can be **transformational** to your learning journey.

Growth mindset (Dweck, 1988) theory can help you to build **resilience** when dealing with **challenges**, and this can be applied to receiving academic feedback. Access the UniSkills: Academic Resilience Toolkit(opens in a new tab) for further information about this.

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Top Tip: Even if you have achieved a grade, you are happy with, and are feeling positive, don't forget to read and understand the detailed comments provided by the marker. Whatever the grade, there will be **constructive comments** you can use to develop your skills further.

Taking care of yourself: Further support

When dealing with challenging emotions, it can help to reach out to others. There is plenty of support you can access at Edge Hill should you need it.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Team

Offers advice and support to all students, with a range of self-help resources, appointments, workshops and counselling.

https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/departments/support/studentservices/wellbeing/

Edge Well 24/7

A free, confidential support service which is available anytime, day or night, all year round.

https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/departments/support/studentservices/edge-well-24-7/

Student View: '*While receiving feedback can feel personal, sharing your emotions and successes with peers and friends on your course can be beneficial as a listening ear to help blow off steam and if they've been through a the same/similar module you may want to exchange peer-to-peer support too'*.

Lauren, Year 3 BA (Hons) Media

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Learning from common feedback themes

Finding a way

Feedback comments can sometimes be tricky to decipher!

This section of the toolkit outlines many of the **common terms** and **phrases** used by academic staff when offering feedback and explores **how** you can use feedback to **improve** your work.

Research and sources

Your feedback may include comments on the sources you have cited in your work. This could be about the **appropriateness** of sources, the **depth** of your reading, or where to find good **quality literature** (e.g., your reading list). The section below explores these areas in more detail.

"Says who? What literature supports your point here?"
- Example Tutor Feedback

Using appropriate sources

Appropriateness means ensuring the sources and evidence you use are **suitable, credible, and relevant** for an academic context. It's not just about having references; it's about using **good quality** information to support your argument.

If tutors commented that your sources were not appropriate, think about how you accessed the information. Did you just put your search terms into Google? If so, this will likely result in finding sources that many not be academic, such as blogs or training guides.

To ensure that your sources are **relevant and suitable**, you will need to search in appropriate places, and your <u>Reading List(opens in a new tab)</u> is the perfect place to start. This is where you will find a selection of **key resources** chosen for you by your tutors.

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Often, these texts are the perfect launchpad to allow you to explore **key concepts** and **theories**, before conducting your own literature searching in Discover More(opens in a new tab), Google Scholar(opens in a new tab), or via journals and databases suggested in your Subject Resources(opens in a new tab).
You can find out more about how to develop an **effective search strategy**, find a wide variety of **good quality** academic literature, and **evaluate your sources** in the UniSkills Finding Academic Information Toolkit(opens in a new tab).

Reading widely

You need to read widely to ensure that all your points are supported with relevant literature. This will be a combination of **academic literature** (e.g., books, eBooks, and journal articles), and relevant **grey literature** (e.g., policies, procedures, or government reports).

If your feedback states you need to demonstrate a **deeper understanding** of the topic, think about whether you **read widely** enough, or if you relied too heavily on a narrow range of sources.

Remember that your reading should inform your writing, and therefore the bulk of your reading needs to take place **before** you begin planning and writing your assignment. Planning in enough time to read widely will also allow you to **make connections** between sources. More information on how and why you should read can be found in the UniSkills Academic Reading Toolkit(opens in a new tab).

By reading widely you will gain enough depth and breadth of knowledge to avoid offering **unsubstantiated opinions** (points that are not supported by citations/ evidence).

Substantiating arguments

If your writing lacks **evidence** (citations) to support the points you are making, it is likely that **'unsubstantiated opinion'** will be mentioned in your academic feedback. This means your tutors are highlighting that areas of your writing are not supported with **relevant literature**. In essence, you are writing what you think or know, rather than demonstrating what you have read and how that formulated your argument.

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You can avoid unsubstantiated opinion by reading prior to planning and writing your assignments. Your reading should drive your writing. When you draft an assignment plan, think about which sources you have read and how they will **support** the points you are making.

When **editing** your work, check that you have consistently **cited** relevant literature. If there are large areas of your text without citations, ask yourself what **evidence** you can use to **substantiate** this claim. If there is no evidence provided, your writing is unsubstantiated opinion and will not provide you with the marks you need.

Language and structure

Feedback sometimes includes comments on key features of **language** such as **style** and **tone**. To ensure that the person reading and marking your work is able to follow your argument, it is important to have a **clear structure**, **logical flow** and **smooth transitions** throughout your writing.

The section below explores these terms and offers some tips to consider. You can find out more information on **planning** and **structure** in the UniSkills Academic Writing Toolkit(opens in a new tab).

"There are too many ideas here, it is difficult to follow your structure."
- Example Tutor Feedback

Language

Academic writing requires you to use **formal** language. It is important to avoid informal elements of language, including:

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- **Contracted forms** - such as 'don't', 'can't', and 'isn't'. Instead, you should write these contractions out in full e.g., 'do not', 'cannot' and 'is not'.
- **Slang and colloquial language** - e.g. using 'basically' when you could use a more formal word like 'primarily'. It is also important to avoid colloquial language like 'kids' when you mean 'children'.
- **Idioms** - phrases such as 'every coin has two sides' or 'a double-edged sword' are not considered formal academic language and can also be lost in translation. To avoid confusion, always write clearly using plain English.

Academic Phrasebank(opens in a new tab) is a useful resource to support you in using formal academic language.

Structure

In assignment writing, **structure** refers to the way your ideas are organised and presented so that your argument is clear and easy to follow. A well-structured piece of writing helps the reader understand your main points and how they relate to each other.
Drafting an **assignment plan** prior to beginning any writing will help you to create a clear piece of work. Think about what you need to cover in the introduction, how you are going to arrange your points or themes in the main body, and what you will need to be recap in the conclusion.

There are many different ways to produce an assignment plan, for example by listing your ideas on paper, creating a table of your sources and themes, or by constructing a mind-map. **Mind-mapping software**, such as Inspiration(opens in a new tab) is also available for you to try.

Keeping to your plan and checking it regularly will help you to ensure that your writing hasn't gone off track.

Flow and transitions

Flow

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In assignment writing, **flow** refers to how smoothly and logically ideas connect and progress throughout a paragraph, or an entire piece of writing. Good flow allows the reader to follow your **argument** easily without any confusion.

Writing a clear assignment plan will help you to plot your paragraphs and see how your ideas/arguments **connect** and **develop**. You can also use **SEED** to help structure your paragraphs, ensuring that you have a **logical flow** to your writing, and that you are discussing each point clearly. More information about SEED can be found in the UniSkills Academic Writing Toolkit(opens in a new tab).

Transitions

In assignment writing, **transitions** are words, phrases, or sentences that **connect** ideas smoothly so the reader can follow your argument without confusion. They act like **bridges** between sentences and paragraphs and can be used to **signpost** the reader between points.

When editing your work, think about how each of your sections follow on. Is there a smooth transition, or do your points still appear unconnected? If you find it hard to make **links** between sections or paragraphs, Academic Phrasebank(opens in a new tab) is a great resource which offers a range of alternative academic phrases.

Demonstrating critically

When your feedback includes comments on criticality, it may mean that your writing needs to be less descriptive. Critical writing demonstrates your understanding of how the sources you have read support each other or offer alternative views. You can find out more information about writing critically in the UniSkills Being Critical Toolkit.

Understanding how to demonstrate criticality in your writing also requires you to have a good grasp on citing your sources. The section below covers key features of critical writing as well as how to provide this evidence.

"Avoid descriptive text, you need to show more criticality in your writing."

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Critical writing

It is not uncommon for tutors to comment 'your writing needs to be more **critical**, and less **descriptive**', so it is important that you understand what this means.

Being descriptive is when you **state** information to **evidence** your point. However, as you move through the levels at university, there is the expectation that you **do more** with your research and knowledge. In simple terms, you want to move from the "**what**" to the "**why**".

Once you have set the scene and evaluated your argument, you may need to demonstrate more criticality. It can be helpful to consider using **critical prompts**. For example;

So what?
Thinking about what the **impacts** or **implications** of your argument are (either positive or negative) can help you to demonstrate criticality.
What next?
This enables you to be critical at a deeper level by considering where research could be developed, identifying any **limitations** to the evidence, and offering alternative suggestions.

Developing your argument

Criticality is one of the central challenges of academic writing. It is your opportunity to make your thinking explicit in a way others can engage with and understand. To do this you will need to present a variety of **arguments** and alternative **perspectives**.

Your tutors want you to demonstrate that you have **read widely** around your topic, and that you have formulated your **argument** based upon that reading. As such, there should be plenty of citations to fully evidence and support your writing.

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By reading widely before you start to write, you are enabling yourself to process all the information, and to **make connections** between sources. This will also help you to **synthesise** sources by establishing links between theory, policy, and practice.

Providing evidence

The citations you use in your work demonstrate that your points or arguments are underpinned by evidence from the literature. The 2 ways to cite are by **quoting** and by **paraphrasing**.

Quoting:
There may be occasions when including a quote in your text is essential, for example, when providing a **definition** or sharing **statistical data**. However, it is usually more appropriate to paraphrase your work.

Paraphrasing:
Paraphrasing means **summarising** the literature you have read in your own words. You are therefore not just repeating what has been said but demonstrating that you understand what it means.

Quoting and paraphrasing each have different rules to follow when including **citations**, so do please check your relevant referencing style to ensure you have followed this correctly. You can also access more information about how to reference in the UniSkills Referencing Toolkit(opens in a new tab).

Demonstrating your knowledge

Some of the most common feedback links to how you demonstrate your knowledge, whether this means the **format** of your citations or reference list, that you have overlooked **key concepts**, or that you didn't meet the **learning outcomes** for that piece of work.

The section below considers what 'referencing' may mean in your assignment feedback, as well as offering **tips** on how to ensure you have covered key concepts and met your learning outcomes.

"This could have been explored in greater depth, reference to key sources is missing."

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References

When tutors comment on **referencing** in your feedback, it may mean a few different things.

1. It could mean there are errors in your **in-text citations** or in your **reference list.** This could be **formatting errors** such as using incorrect punctuation or missing information.
2. It may also be a comment about the reference itself, perhaps the source isn't appropriate, or is too **dated**.
3. Tutors also comment on referencing in relation to a lack of evidence (unsubstantiated opinion), or if there are any concerns about **plagiarism**.
4.

One way to avoid formatting errors is by making sure to follow the relevant referencing style (opens in a new tab)for your subject.

You can also find out more information about **how** to reference correctly in the UniSkills Referencing Toolkit(opens in a new tab), and **why** referencing is important in the UniSkills Academic Integrity Toolkit(opens in a new tab).

Key concepts

If your feedback mentions that you have **misunderstood** or **overlooked key concepts**, try and ensure that you understand what these comments relate to.

Ask yourself whether you overlooked or omitted any essential literature (e.g., key theory, policy or procedural information). Or perhaps you misunderstood what the literature was telling you. This can happen when you haven't read in enough depth.

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If this is the case, a good starting point is to revisit your **learning materials** (e.g., lecture and seminar notes, module reading lists, assignment guidance) to identify any concepts you might have misunderstood or overlooked.

It is good practice to **re-read** your feedback alongside the assignment guidance and learning outcomes to help you understand the comments. If you are still unsure, check with the person who marked your work.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are fundamental to your grade as you are marked on your ability to meet them. If you do not meet a learning outcome you may **fail** your assignment.

If your feedback identified a learning outcome as **'not met'** then it is likely that you will need to **resubmit** the assignment. Therefore, it is important to understand exactly what was missing, so you can avoid repeating the same mistake.

- Firstly, re-read your **assignment** alongside the **learning outcomes** and feedback. Try to identify where any unmet learning outcomes should have been covered. Being able to recognise what is missing can help you plan more effectively for a resubmission.
- For future assignments it is good practice to focus on your learning outcomes **throughout** the whole process. Use key words to search for literature at the planning stage, check back that you are addressing them while you are writing, and again before you submit your work.

If you are unclear on what you need to do differently for a future submission **speak to your tutor** for clarification. You can also arrange a UniSkills appointment(opens in a new tab) to discuss feedback and unpick how to use the comments productively.

Proofreading

It is always good practice to proofread your work before you submit.

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Proofreading not only allows you to spot errors and make any corrections, but also to ensure that you have **acted upon feedback** from your previous assignments.

Responses to feedback example comments:

Example:	Response:
'Be more critical, and less descriptive in your writing'.	Read more widely. Accessing a variety of academic texts.
'Your argument is unsubstantiated'.	'There are issues with the formatting of your in-text citations and reference list'.
'Your structure is difficult to follow'.	Write a clear assignment plan prior to beginning any writing and follow it closely.
'There are issues with the formatting of your in-text citations and reference list'.	'Your argument is unsubstantiated'
'You could explore/discuss this further'.	Use a tool like SEED to ensure your paragraphs include all that they need to.

Remember, working on your academic feedback is a continuous process. Improving your subject knowledge and academic skills takes time and effort, it won't happen overnight - and it's not expected to either.

Student view: *'Progress is not linear! As much as it sounds like a cliché, it is true. The ebbs and flows of your studies are much like the turbulence of life. It is important to try to not to view feedback as a barrier but rather as a form of assistance with room to adapt and learn'.*
Lauren, Year 3 BA (Hons) Media

Reflection and action planning

Action is the fundamental key to all success.
– Pablo Picasso

Seeing feedback as **useful and helpful information** and **part of the learning process** can help you effectively reflect and action plan (or feed forward) to improve future assignments. **Taking action** is what will help you progress in your academic journey.

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After receiving your feedback, you may find it helpful to:

Read the feedback carefully

Read through your **tutor's comments** carefully, more than once. Your first reaction might be emotional, especially if the feedback isn't as good as you hoped.

Having a break and then returning to read it a second time, with a clearer mind, may help you notice **details**, **patterns**, and **advice** you didn't catch the first time.

Do make sure you read the feedback comments and don't just focus on the grade!

Ask for clarification if needed

Feedback is a form of **dialogue** with your tutors (sometimes referred to as a learning conversation) and your engagement in this process is key.

Once you have digested the information, ask yourself:

- Are you clear about what your tutor is telling you?
- Do you understand what you need to do to improve for the next submission?

If not, then follow up with your tutor and **ask for clarification**, you may find that you are not the only one unsure.

Keep a feedback log

Keeping a log of feedback received helps you look for **common themes** or **patterns** across your assessments. Recognising these patterns makes it easier to **target** recurring issues, **apply** feedback across more than one assessment, and help you **track** your progress over time.

For example, do you regularly get feedback about grammar, referencing, or are you asked to use more academic sources? Are you noticing patterns in your feedback that relate to specific topics?

Before starting a new assessment, you can revisit your feedback log and remind yourself of what you should **keep doing** and what you should **avoid**.

A feedback log also acts as a useful **talking point** for discussions with tutors which can lead to more productive and personalised support.

Create a feedback action plan

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A powerful strategy for improving your academic performance, an action plan can help you turn comments into **intentional actions**.

An action plan helps you to decide:

- *What exactly will I improve?*
- *How will I do it?*
- *By when?*

Creating a feedback action plan will help you be **accountable** for taking some action.

Why not create a **feedback plan** based on feedback from your last assessment? You can use our templates below (or one that is recommended by your tutor).

Prioritising actions is also key. Whilst the thought of improving numerous areas of your work might feel overwhelming, using your action plan you can break this down into manageable chunks and prioritise what to tackle first.

Access UniSkills

UniSkills can support you at all stages of the assessment process, from planning to structuring, from to editing to referencing. We can also help you navigate your feedback and create a feedback action plan.

You can book onto a UniSkills workshop(opens in a new tab) or book a one-to-one appointment(opens in a new tab) (in person or online) with one of our experienced Academic Skills Advisors. It is often helpful to upload an essay draft or a recent example of feedback at the point of booking.

Action planning your feedback

Having read why it's important to engage with your feedback and some of the things you may need to consider - such as understanding common themes raised or asking for clarification - it's now time to think about **putting your academic feedback into action**. Below are two templates you can use to help plan what you need to action from the feedback you have received.

Acting upon feedback- short term plan

Whenever you receive academic feedback, it is an excellent idea to **reflect** on the individual comments and draft a **short-term plan**(opens in a new tab) for things you can work on and **develop** to help with your future writing.

Work through your feedback **methodically**, so that you can **categorise** similar **comments/themes**. Once you have identified the most important theme(s) to focus on, you can identify clear **actionable targets** to work towards.

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Theme	Number of comments	Example feedback comment
Example: Referencing	₴₴ |||	"Remember to follow the Edge Hill Harvard Style Guide for your in-text citations."
Structure / flow		
Paragraph / sentence length		
Use of evidence		
Referencing		
Critical thinking / analysis		
Knowledge and understanding		
Meeting Learning Outcomes		
Engagement with the audience (presentations)		
Other (add yours here)		

(Short term plan- feedback table)

Acting upon feedback- long term plan

Once you have reached the end of a semester, or an academic year, you should have a **range of feedback comments** on your assessed work. This information can then be used to help draft a more **long-term plan**(opens in a new tab) on any areas you still need to action moving forward.

Creating a long-term plan is a great way to help you to keep track of your grades, feedback, and **progression**.

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Module	Assessment type	Grade (and weighting)	Feedback: Strengths	Feedback: Areas to develop	Action taken*
Example: NUR2000	Written - 2,000 words	54 (60% of module mark)	Clear structure All LOs met	Use more evidence Develop Criticality	Looked at the UniSkills Being Critical Toolkit

(Long term plan- feedback table)

Learning from feedback is a **lifelong skill** and we hope this section of the toolkit has inspired you to take an **active role** in seeking out, understanding, and learning from your feedback. Think of it as your tutor's gift to you!

Play the video below, as Dr Phillip Dawson discusses ways in which to apply and action your feedback.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zk5G973MH5M&feature=youtu.be

 Activity: Having worked through this section and played the video above, what strategies will you use moving forward to take action on the assessment feedback you receive?

Student view: *'Try to keep track of the themes that emerge from your feedback, and review these with every assignment to pick out key areas to focus on and target. One way of doing this is by making a spreadsheet to note down assessment types, grades, and feedback concerns. You could then start tallying the common feedback themes and pick them as a key area to work on in your next assignments'.*
Lauren, Year 3 BA (Hons) Media

Play the video below as we congratulate you on completing this toolkit, and wish you the best of luck with your studies. Alternatively, you can **access the transcript** as a Word version(opens in a new tab) or PDF version(opens in a new tab).

https://edgehill.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=c44ff24b-dd83-4a7a-84b0-b3b400bad183&start=1.446331

Related resources

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Useful links

- This resource from Manchester Academic Phrasebank(opens in a new tab) can help with the 'phraseological 'nuts and bolts' of **academic writing.**
- Check out our UniSkills toolkits(opens in a new tab) for more support with your academic skills.

UniSkills Blogs

UniSkills write regular blogs(opens in a new tab), including a monthly focus on **library resources** and **academic skills**. In these quick reads you can learn about useful resources, how to access them and their benefits to your studies. You might even find us exploring new ways of thinking!

Other resources

Check out LinkedIn Learning (opens in a new tab)for access to **free,** unlimited access to thousands of high-quality **online courses** and **video tutorials** written by industry experts.

UniSkills support at Edge Hill University

As well as our toolkits, there are many ways you can access **support** for your **academic skills** development. Whether you are new to studying, need to **refresh** or **develop** skills we have a **range of options** for you to access at graduate and postgraduate taught level.

Webpages

Reach your potential and visit our **UniSkills web pages**. Find out more about the **support** designed to help you **develop your academic skills** and **confidence** at university and beyond. Whatever your subject or level of study, UniSkills has something to offer.

https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/departments/support/ls/uni-skills/

Workshops

UniSkills workshops and **webinars** are an opportunity for a deeper dive into a **specific skill** that will **support you on your academic journey**. Facilitated by our friendly and knowledgeable Academic Skills Advisors, these sessions provide an **informal safe space** where you will be **supported** alongside other students in a small group setting.

https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/departments/support/ls/uni-skills/uniskills-workshops/

Appointments

All students are able to book a **one-to-one appointment.** Our experienced Academic Skills Advisors can help you **develop your academic skills and strategies** throughout your time at university. One-

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to-one support is available on a wide range of topics including **academic reading, writing and referencing, finding information**, and **preparing your assignment for submission**.

https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/departments/support/ls/uni-skills/one-to-one-support/

Ask a question

For any **questions** across any of our **library and learning services,** you can **Ask Us** online.

https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/service/ask-us/

Campaigns

Explore our **year-round** UniSkills campaigns to **enhance your academic journey** at Edge Hill. From pre-arrival prep to acing your exams, we've got something for everyone!

https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/departments/support/ls/uni-skills/uniskills-campaigns/

Keep in touch

Library and learning services Instagram

Make sure you're following us over on Instagram for all the latest Library and Learning Services news, events and support: @EHULibrary(opens in a new tab)

You'll discover: weekly what's on stories; reminders about upcoming campaigns and events; fun, interactive polls and competitions; hidden treasures from our Archive; and reading for pleasure recommendations.

Learning and Library services blog

In the Library and Learning Services (LS) blog(opens in a new tab) you'll find lots of information, ideas and support curated by a wide range of staff and students from across the service.

Browse through all our useful blogs via the Home tab or visit individual areas of interest via the sub-blog headings along the menu bar.

Your views count

Thank you for engaging with this toolkit.

We'd love to know what you thought, and you can share your feedback in our short UniSkills Toolkit Satisfaction Survey(opens in a new tab). The survey should take you no longer than five minutes to complete.

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As a thank you for taking part, you can also choose whether you'd like to enter our biannual prize draw to win a £10 voucher of your choice (terms and conditions apply)(opens in a new tab).

Your feedback helps us to continually improve our support - thank you!

"You have now completed this UniSkills toolkit and can close the window. We hope you found it useful and we look forward to continuing to support you with your academic skills development".
-The UniSkills Team

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