MARKING STUDENT WORK

Feedback is an area that students identify as key to helping them to improve their learning, and markers play an important part in providing this feedback to students. Without clear feedback, students have little indication that they are learning. Students benefit from feedback that provides guidance that helps them improve in the future and from feedback that is received soon after submission so as to inform future assignments. It is a fine balance between detailed marking and a reasonable turnaround of submitted assignments.

The following are some suggestions for helping to achieve this balance:

Before you begin, **talk to the paper coordinator** and other markers to get an overview of what is required.

- What are their expectations for the assignment and marking of it?
- Is there a marking scheme or model answer to follow?
- Is the marking to be done on paper or electronically?
- What is the expected turnaround time?
- How are grades handled?
- Are there other markers?
- Is moderation required? How is this done?
- How are assignments returned to students?
- How can general comments about the assignment be given to the class?
- Is there a requirement to make use of Stream or Turnitin?
- How are late assignments dealt with?

Familiarise yourself with the assignment task and the marking guide in the study guide. This is what students have used to guide their work.

If possible, **mark a few assignments** with the Paper Coordinator or other markers before you get underway on your own. Together you can identify areas to focus on and comments to make. Alternatively the Paper Coordinator might mark one as an example, or you could mark a couple and get feedback on your marking.

Determine how long you can spend on each assignment and work out how much feedback you intend to give. Long essays will require more comments than a short test or lab report. Remember you are trying to give the students feedback that they can learn from but also turn their work around in a timely fashion.

Quickly skim the assignment before you start to mark. This gives a sense of the quality of the students work before you start marking.

Give some early feedback to the whole class via Stream (if appropriate). Give students your initial impressions of the quality of their work after marking a small number of submissions. For assignments and tests where a model answer is available, consider sharing it at this stage. This gives students feedback soon after submission while the assignment is still fresh in their minds.

If you encounter recurring issues or themes across the class make a note of them and **write general feedback for all students**. This can be added to Stream, attached to the assignments or the lecturer can convey this information in class. If you know this general feedback is going to all students then you don't need to keep repeating it on every assignment. This will free you to concentrate on areas where students will benefit most from comments on their work.

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Write feedback in a way that is helpful to students. Try to provide constructive comments that help students to identify their weaknesses and give them strategies or ideas about how to improve for next time. When writing your comments, ensure that they are legible, do not obliterate the text on which you are commenting, and provide enough information to give the student a fair chance of doing better next time. Although using questions can help to provoke thought, e.g., "Could you rephrase this to make it clearer to the reader?" "Does this example fit with your main argument?" explaining *how* to rephrase or *why* the example doesn't fit with the main argument will be much more helpful to the struggling student.

Think of yourself as a teacher rather than an editor. Your goal is to support student learning and promote further thinking rather than marking every error. If work does need serious editing consider editing a paragraph or small portion as an example and explaining that this is what is required next time. This also works well if referencing is incorrect.

Help students determine which of your comments are the most important. Students tend to apply equal weight to all comments, so you can help them by identifying the main areas for improvement and the aspects they have done well.

Ensure your marking has been consistent over time. Have you marked the first assignments in much the same way as the last ones? If you are marking a large batch of assignments, you need to go back and 'self-moderate' to ensure that you are marking consistently.

Take regular breaks to ensure that you stay fresh and focused. Reward yourself when you attain milestones such as 'halfway there'.

Learning Consultants at the campus Centres for Teaching and Learning can provide academic support to students. They offer a range of services including individual consultations, study group sessions, writing support and a pre-reading service.

If a student would benefit from assistance with their academic work then refer them to the Centre for Teaching and Learning on your campus. You can also

As a marker, you may be required to make use of tools in Massey's core e-toolset. Following is a brief description of each tool. Initially you should discuss your expected use of these e-tools with the Paper Coordinator for whom you are marking.

Stream is Massey's learning management system based on Moodle. It is the hub of our 'virtual learning environment'. Students can submit assignments through Stream and there is also a detailed gradebook function.
http://stream4staff.massey.ac.nz
http://stream4students.massey.ac.nz

Turnitin is a web-based solution for managing written assignments. Massey uses Turnitin: Originality Check that works from within Stream. This helps lecturers ensure original work by checking student submissions against web pages, publications and student papers.
http://turnitin.massey.ac.nz