

## GIVING FEEDBACK

Your feedback is valuable - it can help other students to improve their skills and guide improvements to university services. Your feedback is most effective when your comments are constructive.

### Giving constructive feedback

Constructive feedback identifies strengths and weaknesses and provides suggestions for improvement. General feedback like "That was great" is not effective because it is not specific enough.

Give specific feedback by noting what worked well and one or two things to work on - and suggest ways to do this.

For example, 'Your presentation was well-researched and informative; however, you spoke too quietly for everyone to hear. I suggest working on projecting your voice.'



### Giving critical feedback

Being constructive does not mean avoiding criticism - critical feedback is necessary to help us to improve. However, pay attention to how you present critical feedback:

- Make sure you focus your comments on the work/performance/service/course, not the person or people you are evaluating.
- Avoid using a critical tone or being judgmental in your comments.

#### TIP

Frame any criticism as a suggestion, not as an accusation. For example: 'Your slides had a lot of text. I suggest using more visuals and less text.'

~~You did that wrong.~~

### Giving peer feedback

When evaluating others in your group/class/team, aim to be objective - put aside any opinions, judgements or feelings you may have about the person.

Also avoid being 'nice', using anonymous feedback to 'get even', or airing grievances about individual members (instead, aim to resolve issues in your group as they arise).

#### TIP

Avoid flattery: give honest feedback that helps people to build on strengths and address weaknesses. For example, 'You presented good information but it needs to be more clearly organised.'

~~You were awesome!~~

### Completing evaluation surveys

SURF evaluations and the Student Experience Survey invite you to give formal feedback to the university. Write your response in a professional manner:

- Use formal language
- Be honest but polite
- Be constructive
- Avoid generalisations (like always/never)
- Avoid using sarcasm
- Avoid using offensive language\*
- Avoid making personal attacks\*

*\*Note: Any disrespectful communication contravenes UWA's Code of Conduct.*

#### TIP

Before giving feedback, ask yourself:

- What would improve this (service/process/work/presentation/course)?
- What outcome/s do I want my feedback to achieve?

# RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

To get the most from feedback, aim to listen with an open mind and avoid arguing or being defensive, even if you disagree with something. Feedback will help you hone your skills, so view it as helpful information and don't take it personally.

## Be proactive

Treat feedback as a discussion and involve yourself in the feedback process:

- Check anything you are unclear about (for example, ask: 'could you explain/ I just want to check what you meant by...').
- Ask for specific feedback on any areas you want to improve.
- Follow up on helpful advice by:
  - ⇒ Summarising in your own words.
  - ⇒ Creating an action plan for developing your academic skills.
- Find out what resources and support are available to help you (for example, get support from STUDYSmarter or the library).

### TIP

Visit the **STUDYSmarter website** to:

- Book an online consultation with a learning skills adviser to discuss your feedback/skills/work.
- Find online resources to help you build your academic skills.

It's a good idea to get regular, informal feedback as well as formal feedback. Informal feedback could be in the form of a short conversation with someone in your class about your ideas, or you could ask someone to evaluate your first draft report or presentation.

### TIP

Be specific when asking for feedback - for example: 'I want to know if I'm speaking slowly enough when I present to the class.'

## Sift feedback

The feedback you receive from different people may vary - and you might even find some feedback contradictory, confusing or just unhelpful.

Be willing to discuss feedback and ask for further explanation or examples if you are confused. You might find it helpful to go through your feedback with someone whose judgement you trust.

Finally, use your own judgement to decide which feedback will be most helpful to you.

### TIP

Evaluate your own work. Ask yourself: What did I do well? What can I improve on? What steps can I take to improve? What support do I need?

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## Any suggestions?

We would love to hear from you. Email us at [studysmarter@uwa.edu.au](mailto:studysmarter@uwa.edu.au)

This resource was developed by the STUDYSmarter team for UWA students. When using our resources, please retain them in their original form with both the STUDYSmarter heading and the UWA logo.

