
Tip sheet – Providing constructive feedback in FLO

Providing constructive [feedback](#) encourages students to reflect and learn from assessment activities, both formative (including drafts) and summative. The [Educational Quality Framework](#) (2.a.iii) promotes and supports student success through:

meaningful assessment that is well-suited to discipline and context and provides timely and structured feedback to support learning development and success.

Constructive feedback contributes to a personalised learning experience, encouraging a dialogical approach between students and teachers, and engaging students in critical discourse ([Learning and teaching principles](#) 1, 2 and 7). The [Good practice guide – Designing assessment](#) states that ‘Assessment will provide quality and timely feedback to enhance learning’.

Where applicable to their function (learning/teaching purpose), FLO activity tools have built-in mechanisms for providing feedback. Mahara eportfolio, a recommended tool in the [FLO ecosystem](#), also has feedback capabilities. These tools are explored below in relation to ways to provide feedback.

Planning assessment feedback

FLO has many tools that enable feedback. Before you decide how to provide feedback to students in FLO, here are some questions you may want to consider:

- Will you give feedback on activities that are not assessed (but lead to assessment)?
- What level of feedback will help your students develop their learning and improve their grades?
- How much feedback is appropriate for this assessment item (which may be formative or summative)?
- How much [scaffolding](#) should you provide in your feedback to support student follow through?
- How would you like your students to use/respond to your feedback?

Feedback strategies in FLO

To ensure quality feedback using FLO tools, here are some practical tips:

1. Make expectations and feedback mechanisms clear
2. Use a [rubric/marking guide](#)
3. Use (rich) feedback comments
4. Create a feedback loop

1. Make expectations and feedback mechanisms clear

If students know what to expect from feedback they will be able to action it better. You can also make this a two-way communication that supports a feedback loop.

2. Use a rubric/marking guide

Students will benefit from having a rubric/marking guide so they know how their assessment item will be marked and can aim for success. An effective rubric/marking guide breaks down the criteria for the assessment and the elements required to attain them.

Teaching staff benefit from a rubric/marking guide because it enables marking consistency across the teaching team and ensures that students receive the same standard of feedback. It also has the potential to save markers time and facilitate moderation for topic coordinators.

3. Use (rich) feedback comments

Feedback comments help students understand their grade and support them to be [active learners](#). In a rubric/marking guide, they could relate to each criteria or all criteria. Comments could also be independent of/additional to a rubric/marking guide, located within the tool. They could encourage follow up – what students need to do to develop their learning, prior to the next assessment item.

Teaching staff can contextualise their grading decision using comments. This is useful should they need to discuss the grade with the student or reconsider the grade (eg if it is disputed). As all feedback is

stored in FLO, this comment will also help future teachers or others, should the grade be disputed in the future.

4. Create a feedback loop

Did students find their feedback easy to access? What did they think about the feedback they received? Were they able to apply it? Knowing how accessible and useful they found their feedback may help with attrition, will encourage students to be active learners, and facilitate a student-teacher dialogue.

FLO tools for implementation

The FLO tools listed below support providing students with constructive feedback using the feedback strategies suggested.

1. Make expectations and feedback mechanisms clear

In your FLO topic some options are:

- locate assessment details consistently (eg in the tool/a module) and tell students where to find it (a [welcome video](#) could include this information)
- provide a description of how and where you will give feedback (eg in the tool)
- use a [discussion forum](#) to talk about assessment items and feedback/marking strategies
- ask students what they expect from feedback using the discussion forum or a survey tool (eg the [feedback](#) activity)

2. Use a rubric/marking guide

You can include a rubric/marking guide with any assessment item, no matter what FLO tool/s it uses (eg add it as a file below the tool, link to it in another module within the topic).

The [assignment](#) activity enables you to locate the rubric/marking guide within the tool itself. When setting up the assignment, you have two options:

- [upload a feedback template](#) (rubric, marking guide) to the tool for **offline** marking
- [build a feedback template](#) (marking guide, rubric, checklist) within the tool for **online** marking

When marking assignments, you can:

- download the assignments and feedback template to [mark offline](#) – FLO assigns a feedback template to each student
- [mark online in FLO](#) (Word/PDF) using the online marking functionality and/or the built-in feedback template (as well as the feedback comments box)
- ‘mix and match’ these methods (eg mark online using a downloadable feedback template)

Feedback is private – between the individual student and teaching staff. If it is a group assignment, you can send feedback to the entire group (default option) or an individual. Viewing this feedback can help a teaching team provide support to students and could also help with peer review or [moderation](#) of feedback across the teaching team.

3. Use (rich) feedback comments

The [HTML editor](#) is a feature of most FLO tools where text input is enabled. With this text editor you can create hyperlinks, embed videos, add a short audio, and format text to give rich feedback to your students. Rich feedback comments are also possible in Mahara (see ‘Mahara eportfolio’ below).

Assignment

The [assignment](#) activity has multiple methods for providing feedback, including ‘Feedback comments’ which is ideal for providing overall feedback on an assessment item; inline comments; annotations within a submitted file; comments in the feedback template (eg rubric); and comments in the offline grading worksheet.

When **setting up** the assignment, you can enable:

- [feedback comments](#) (ticked by default)
- inline comments (if online text is ticked as the submission type)

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- an [offline assignment](#) (no submission) where you provide feedback on student performance during/after the session (eg a practical or presentation).

When **marking** the assignment, you can:

- mark online in FLO (Word/PDF) using comments, text highlights, feedback comments
- mark offline on your device (which also allows for audio feedback if a Word/PDF file), as well as providing feedback comments online if you want.

You can set up an [offline assignment](#) (no submission) to provide private and personalised feedback across any assessment activity that uses a FLO tool. Locate the offline assignment under the activity (forum, wiki, blog etc) and give it a meaningful title/description so students know to look there for feedback. All teachers/tutors can provide feedback using this tool. This is an appropriate tool for **overall feedback** across the entire activity (eg all forum contributions).

Quiz

[Quiz – main entry](#) (FLO Staff Support site)

[Quiz – the basics](#) (self-paced workshop and resources site)

Feedback the student receives during and after a quiz will depend on the question types and the quiz settings you choose. The settings you choose will vary depending on the quiz's purpose (formative/summative etc). If the quiz is formative, you can use question feedback to guide students to the correct response (eg link to more information). If you set question behaviour for your quiz to 'Interactive with multiple tries', you can also provide hints. If the quiz is summative (eg a final test/exam) you may choose not to give feedback, or to make it minimal rather than rich.

You can provide three types of feedback in a quiz – **specific** (to the response the student gave to a question), **general** (shown to the student after they have completed the question), and **overall** (shown after a quiz has been attempted). The quiz settings control how and when feedback is delivered for the quiz (Question behaviour and Review options). All students receive the same feedback, depending on the responses they make. However, you can add a personalised comment when [reviewing quiz attempts](#) or [marking essay questions](#).

Other FLO tools

Each FLO tool also has its own inbuilt feedback such as:

- [Forum](#) – posts (public), ratings (private)
- [Wiki](#) – annotations (public)
- [Blog](#) – comments (public/private), ratings (private)
- [Database](#) – comments (public), ratings (private)

4. Create a feedback loop

You could use the feedback activity (eg [Touchpoint survey](#)) to check in on students at key points during the semester. This approach gives students a voice across the topic, as well as helping future students. If you want to follow up with students as part of the loop, the activity needs to show their names (ie it can't be anonymous).

You could also use a forum for this purpose (again, not anonymous), or contact students privately using the [dialogue](#) or [chat](#) activities.

It is also possible to create a feedback loop in Mahara (see 'Mahara eportfolio' below).

Mahara eportfolio

[Mahara eportfolio](#), part of the [FLO ecosystem](#), is a personal online platform that stays with students during their time at Flinders. It is a space where they can connect different aspects of their studies, show progress over time, and organise/showcase their work. As a teacher, you can ask students to set up their eportfolio in ways that enable you to provide feedback. When assessing work in Mahara, consider whether you will provide feedback via the assignment tool or via Mahara:

- **Feedback via the assignment tool**

Feedback that relates to your judgement on the quality of the work submitted and justifies a formal grade should occur in the assignment tool. This type of feedback acts as a record of your thinking should there be a grade challenge. You can set up the assignment tool to receive [Mahara eportfolios](#).

- **Feedback via Mahara**

There are two methods for feedback in Mahara. Importantly both are managed by the student (ie they can delete any feedback you provide using these methods if they wish). Both methods can provide rich feedback (links, images etc):

- **Comments block**

Using the Comments block, you can enrich the student's eportfolio, giving it a value-added purpose. Your comments could include praise for work well done, useful extra information, or evidence that you have been there (social presence). Threaded conversations are possible – you can reply to comments and they show as a thread, so dialogic feedback can occur. Only one Comments block per page is possible. Email notifications alert the user that a comment has been added, enabling prompt review.

- **Annotations block**

In the Annotations block, 'Allow feedback' is defaulted to 'Yes'. This means you can 'place feedback' on student annotations (eg reflections) in situ (below what they have written). The student can also add feedback (eg in response to a teacher's feedback) but it is not threaded (you have to click on the feedback separately). More than one Annotations block per page is possible. Email notifications alert the user that feedback has been added, enabling prompt review.