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## **Return of Feedback on Assessments Policy**

### **1. Context**

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, hereinafter referred to as Trinity, recognises students' entitlement to feedback on assessments, and that feedback is an integral part of learning.

### **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the minimum standards for the timely provision of feedback to students on assessments.

### **3. Benefits**

- 3.1 A policy governing the return of feedback on assessments frames the expectations of both staff and students and underlines the importance of timely feedback in the student learning experience.

### **4. Scope**

- 4.1 This policy applies to modules in undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes at Trinity: to modules owned and delivered by Trinity in the context of Dual and Joint degree programmes (as outlined in an inter-institutional operational framework agreement), to taught modules taken by students on a structured PhD, to credit-bearing modules in respect of assessments that may or may not lead to an award, e.g. standalone modules or micro-credentials.
- 4.2 Semester 1 examination feedback is within the scope of this Policy. However, assessments that are not scheduled to be returned within the academic year (e.g. dissertations on taught Masters courses, some final year work at the undergraduate level and capstone projects) do not fall within the return deadlines in this policy but feedback can still be sought by the student on request and this will normally be provided after the end of year Court of Examiners in Semester 2. Details of the assessments that do not fall within the return deadlines in this policy should be communicated to students.

### **5. Principles**

- 5.1 Timely and constructive feedback makes a valuable contribution to students' learning and development relative to learning outcomes.
- 5.2 Clear communication and dialogue is central to managing students' expectations and creating a common understanding of the importance and purpose of feedback, what constitutes feedback and where students can access feedback.

## 6. Definitions

Assessments constitute, amongst other things, both written and/or oral and/or practical work completed by a student during a course of study to facilitate learning<sup>1</sup>

The scope and purpose of assessment is commonly conceptualized in three ways: Assessment Of Learning; Assessment For Learning; and Assessment As Learning<sup>2</sup>.

## 7. Policy

- 7.1 Students should be provided with clear information on what constitutes feedback.
- 7.2 Feedback may take various forms and be provided individually, by group or cohort, and through the use of peer-to-peer feedback. Feedback to students may be provided through:
  - Written feedback (e.g. annotations on an assignment, model/sample answers or evaluations against a rubric).
  - Verbal feedback (e.g. individual or group discussions in in-person or online formats).
- 7.3 Feedback strategies and mechanisms used within a programme or module should be clearly communicated to students via, for example, Blackboard.
- 7.4 Where and how students can access feedback on their assessments should be clearly communicated.
- 7.5 The deadline for return of feedback on assessment components is proportionate to the size and scope of the assessment, the size of the class (it may take longer to provide individual feedback to students in larger classes - in such cases, generic or group feedback via model or sample answers may be provided in the short-term), the assessment type (i.e. summative vs formative assessment) and whether the assessment is at undergraduate or postgraduate level.
- 7.6 Feedback on formative assessment (i.e. assessment that counts towards the overall grade of the module) should be made available to students within a time frame that allows students to action change based on the feedback received. For undergraduate students this should be no later than 20 working days after the assessment is submitted, and for postgraduate students no later than 30 working

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<sup>1</sup> Assessed components may include essays, tests, assignments, practical classes, field trips, performances, laboratory or field projects, and professional placements. The school, department or course office, whichever is appropriate, publishes its requirements for satisfactory completion of assessed components (See Calendar, Parts II and III at <http://www.tcd.ie/calendar/>).

<sup>2</sup> Assessment Of Learning, or **summative assessment**: where the main goal is to get a “snapshot” insight into a student’s performance and progression at any point in time. These assessments measure student learning for progression or certification. Examples include mid-term exams, end of term paper or report, final year project.

Assessment For Learning (**formative assessment**): where the main goal is to give students feedback in order to help them learn and improve their performance in future assessments. Examples include summarizing the main points of a lecture, drawing a concept map to represent their understanding of a topic.

Assessment As Learning (**also formative**): where the focus of assessment is on developing students’ skills in assessing their own work so that they may set their own learning goals and monitor their progress towards them. Examples include self-reflection work, peer assessment against a rubric etc.

days after the assessment is submitted<sup>3</sup>.

7.7 Where this is not logistically possible or academically appropriate, students will be informed in advance and provided with an alternative date for the return of feedback along with clear reasons for the alternative return date.

7.8 It is recognised that summative assessments can take various forms including continuous assessments and end-of-module examinations/assessments.

- For summative assessments which are completed within the teaching period (continuous assessment), feedback should be provided to students before the end of the module and within 20 working days of assessment completion.
- For summative assessments completed at the end of the teaching period (end-of module assessments/examinations), provision of feedback within the 20-day time frame may not be possible due to the proximity of assessment submission dates to the completion of teaching periods or to exam boards.
- Feedback on/discussion of end of Semester 1 examinations<sup>4</sup> can only take place after publication of provisional examination results (in early February) and on the understanding that the provisional mark cannot be queried under the recheck/remark regulation ([Calendar Part II](#), Section II Academic Progress, section 68), as all marks are provisional until moderated by the Court of Examiners in Semester 2 (Calendar Part II, Section II Academic Progress, section 67(i)). The recheck/remark regulation only applies to final marks moderated by the Court of Examiners in Semester 2.

7.9 Students may seek further feedback by contacting academic staff during office-hours.

## **8. Responsibility**

8.1 The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies, as appropriate.

## **9 Related Documents**

9.1 [Feedback Guidelines \(Centre for Academic Practice\)](#)

9.2 [Trinity College Dublin Inclusive Curriculum Project – Trinity-INC](#)

## **10 Document Control**

10.1 Approved by: University Council

10.2 Date of initial approval: 19 November 2014 (Return of Coursework Policy)

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<sup>3</sup> Feedback on formative assessment that does not count towards the overall grade of the module (e.g. tutorial work or practice questions) does not fall within the 20/30 day deadline.

<sup>4</sup> Feedback on semester one examinations includes (i) publication of provisional marks, (ii) viewing of the examination script, (iii) qualitative feedback on the answers provided. No comment on exam results or performance is provided. Where a student is unhappy with their mark, the opportunity exists to request a recheck under the recheck/remark process ([Calendar Part II](#), Section II Academic Progress, section 68) but only after the Court of Examiners in Semester 2 has taken place.

10.3 Date revised policy approved: 16 April 2025

10.4 Date policy effective from: 29 August 2025

10.5 Date of next review: 2027/2028