

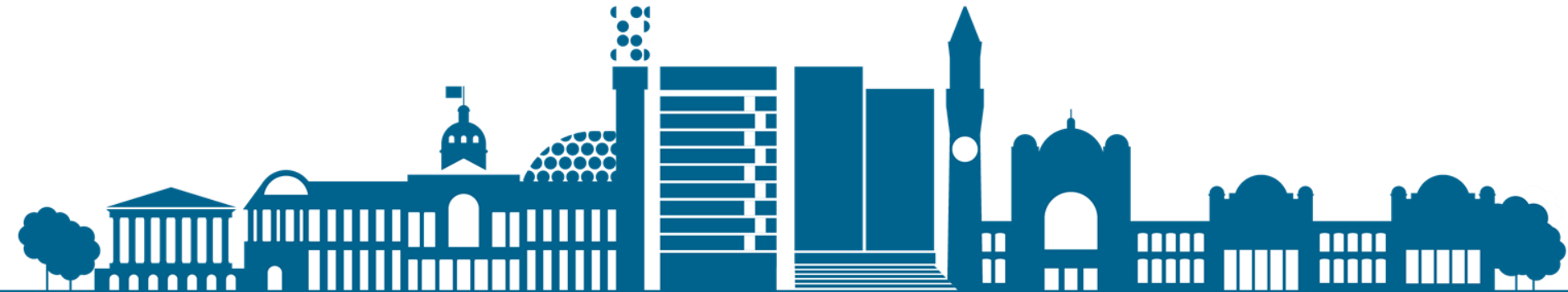


UNIVERSITY OF
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Using feedback to feed forward

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Aims

- ❑ Reflect on feedback you have received
- ❑ Consider how to deal with feedback and implement feed forward
- ❑ Consider common pieces of feedback and how you might address them
- ❑ Learn to put yourself in the marker's position
- ❑ Explore a system for categorising your feedback

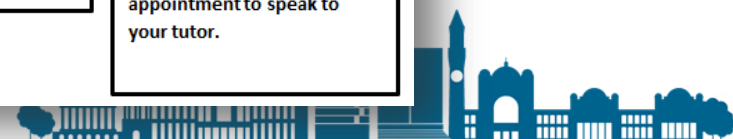
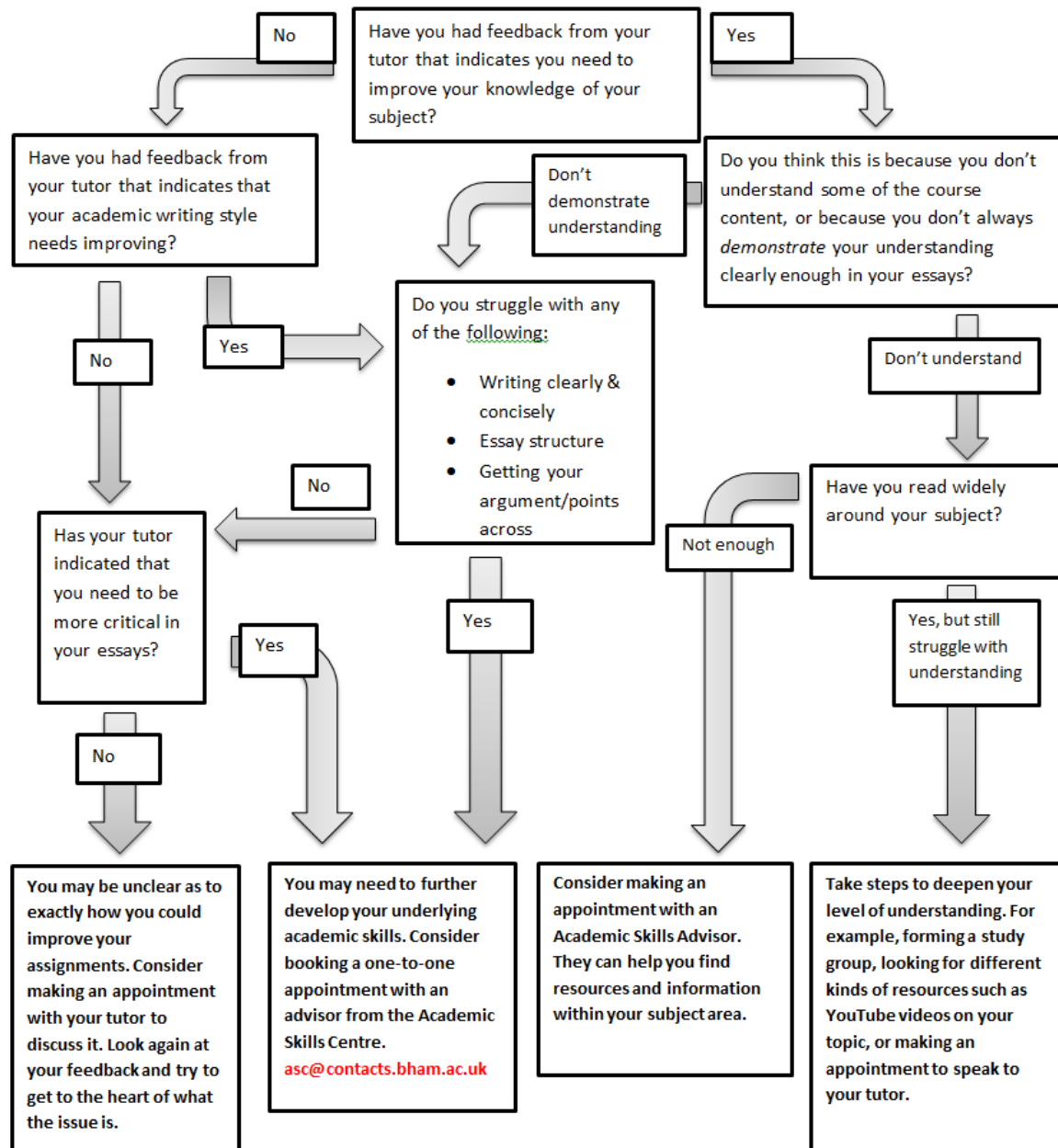


Activity 1

In groups, please discuss and answer the following questions:

1. Please write down, and share, one piece of feedback or criticism that you have had on a relatively recent essay or assignment.
2. Could you see why the marker made that comment? Was there anything you were unclear about?
3. What will you do differently this year, based on feedback from last year?





Frustrations with feedback

“Feedback is overwhelming and feels negative.”

- ❑ Your marker is pushing you to do the best you can.
- ❑ Academics critique their colleagues' work in the same way, to raise the standard for publication.
- ❑ It's not personal!



Frustrations with feedback

“I received a disappointing mark, but all of the feedback on my essay is quite positive.”

What you’ve written is good, but the marker would probably like to see...

- ❑ More depth
- ❑ More analysis
- ❑ More development of ideas
- ❑ More structure



Frustrations with feedback

“I received lots of feedback, but I’m struggling to convert it into actual, practical changes.”

Very often, you may be too close to your own work to step back and recognise where you went wrong.

- ❑ Leave some time, and then look again.
- ❑ Try the steps in your booklet



Taking action

Create an action plan of all the key things you need to work on.

- To avoid becoming overwhelmed, prioritise three areas on which to focus

Continue to expand your action plan as you get more feedback

- Look out for patterns or recurring comments – these are the things you *really* need to address.

Make an appointment with your marker (if possible)

- This might further clarify the feedback.



Activity 2

- ❑ “Essay lacks a clear focus.”
- ❑ “The writing style makes the ideas unclear or hard to follow.”
- ❑ “Essay needs to demonstrate more critical analysis.”
- ❑ “Referencing and range of sources are inadequate.”



“Essay lacks a clear focus.”

- ❑ Know what you want to argue in the essay before you begin to write.
- ❑ Clearly state the essay’s argument in your introduction.
- ❑ Make sure each paragraph contributes something towards that argument.
- ❑ Make sure each paragraph indicates the relevance/significance of the point.



“The writing style makes the ideas unclear or hard to follow.”

- ❑ Make sure your sentences aren't too long or cluttered with different ideas.
- ❑ Ensure each paragraph makes just one main point.
- ❑ Make the links between each paragraph very clear to the reader – don't assume they will know how your ideas fit together.
- ❑ Look at the sequencing of sentences within each paragraph – are they building up your point in a logical, easy to follow way?



“Essay needs to demonstrate more critical analysis.”

Go through your essay, highlighting descriptive writing in one colour, and critical analysis in another.

- Have you got too much description and not enough analysis?

Look at your chunks of description.

- Could they be condensed?
- How could you develop them to become analysis?
- Where have you missed opportunities to analyse, criticise, or evaluate?



“Essay needs to demonstrate more critical analysis.”

Make sure you know what you want to say/argue in the essay.

- If you have a clear argument, your writing naturally becomes more critical, as you try to convince the marker that your point of view is valid.

Never put in evidence or quotes without commenting on them in some way.

- This might mean evaluating the quality of the evidence, or explaining why it is relevant/ important to your argument.



“Referencing and range of sources are inadequate.”

- ❑ Visit the I-cite website: intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/icite and brush up on the Style Guide for your School’s referencing system.
- ❑ Make an appointment with an Academic Skills Advisor, who can help you find a range of good quality resources for your assignments.
- ❑ Make sure you are spending enough time reading and researching.
 - Good essays are built on a solid foundation of wide, critical reading.
- ❑ Always link your sources and evidence clearly to the main argument or points of your essay/ dissertation.
 - Don’t leave the reader to guess *why* a piece of evidence or a reference is there.



Categorising your feedback

Comments relating to my UNDERSTANDING of the topic

- e.g. the accuracy of the information you've included, things you may have got slightly wrong, aspects of the topic you have got muddled over or not explained well



Categorising your feedback

Comments relating to my ability to ANALYSE, ARGUE, CRITICISE, EVALUATE etc.

This might take the form of comments like :

- “Too descriptive”
- “Only presents one point of view”
- “Develop your ideas further”
- “Say more about this”
- “What are the implications of this?”

When a tutor suggests that you could have interrogated a topic further, they are often implying they want to see your critical thinking skills at work.



Categorising your feedback

Comments relating to my LANGUAGE AND STYLE.

- If your tutor has repeatedly corrected or circled grammar errors, you know you need to take steps to improve your writing and proofreading skills.
- Take careful note of suggestions such as “Please always capitalise this,” or “Do not abbreviate such-and-such” or “This word is too informal”. These style issues are easy to fix and you can gain valuable marks by getting them right next time.



Categorising your feedback

Comments relating to my use of EVIDENCE.

- These can take many forms. Sometimes a tutor wants you to:
 - use better quality evidence
 - stop relying too heavily on a single author
 - see you citing several authors to back up just one point – to indicate that you have synthesised ideas from several different sources
 - see a much clearer link between your references/evidence, and the arguments or points you are making



Activity 3

Putting yourself in the marker's shoes, imagine you are marking 50 essays.

- ☐ What would irritate or concern you if you saw or read it in an essay?
- ☐ What would give you a good first impression of an essay and make you happy to read on?
- ☐ What might help an essay to stand out from the other 49?



Academic Skills Centre

Location

1st floor, main library

Telephone

(0121) 414 3666

Email

asc@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Web

intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/libraryservices/library/skills/asc

The screenshot shows the University of Birmingham Intranet page for the Academic Skills Centre (ASC). The header includes the University of Birmingham logo, the text 'UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM | INTRANET', and links for 'Main website', 'Login', 'For students', and 'For staff'. The breadcrumb trail reads: 'University of Birmingham Intranet > Academic Services > Library Services > Library > Skills and training > Academic Skills Centre'.

The main heading is 'Academic Skills Centre (ASC)'. Below this, there are three columns of services, each with an icon and a description:

- Academic skills**: Workshops and guides to develop your skills.
- Mathematics Support Centre**: Maths and stats support.
- Library and information skills**: Find and cite resources for your study and research.
- Digital Skills**: Training in stats software, digital images, spreadsheets and more.
- One-to-one appointments**: Develop and improve your academic skills.
- PASS**: Peer Assisted Study Sessions for first year undergraduates.

At the bottom of the main content area are three links: 'Academic Skills Gateway', 'Feedback', and 'Contact us'.

On the right side, there is a sidebar titled 'In 'Academic Skills Centre'' with a list of links:

- > Academic Skills Centre
- > New Taught Student Welcome events
- > Events and workshops
- > Transition to University
- > Mature undergraduate students
- > Taught Postgraduates
- > What to expect
- > ASC resources
- > Top tips for revision
- > Appointments
- > Maths Support
- > Academic skills support
- > Contact us



Academic Skills Gateway

The screenshot displays the Academic Skills Gateway website. At the top is a navigation bar with links: Home, Learning how to learn, Maths and statistics, Research skills, Working with others, and Writing skills. The main content area features a large header for 'Library Services Academic Skills Gateway' and a grid of six service tiles: 'Learning how to learn' (lightbulb icon), 'Maths and statistics' (calculator icon), 'Research skills' (magnifying glass icon), 'Working with others' (group of people icon), 'Writing skills' (pen icon), and a social media section with Facebook and Twitter logos. The footer includes the University of Birmingham and Library Services logos. A right-hand sidebar contains sections for 'Academic Skills Centre', 'Confidential 1-1 appointments' (with links to Academic Skills and Digital Skills appointments), 'Workshops and classes' (with links to workshop registrations), 'Library and Information Skills' (with a list of college-specific guides), 'Stand-alone resources' (with links to GEL, postgraduate transition, and Skills4Study), 'Feedback', 'Accessibility', 'Mathematics Support Centre', and 'FindIt@Bham'.

Library Services
Academic Skills Gateway

Home Learning how to learn Maths and statistics Research skills Working with others Writing skills

Learning how to learn **Maths and statistics**

Research skills **Working with others**

Writing skills

Academic Skills Centre

Confidential 1-1 appointments

- [Academic Skills appointments](#)
- [Digital Skills appointments](#)

Workshops and classes

- [Academic Skills workshop registration](#)
- [Digital Skills workshop registration](#)

Library and Information Skills

- [A-Z list of Guides](#)
- [College of Arts and Law](#)
- [College of Engineering and Physical Sciences](#)
- [College of Life and Environmental Sciences](#)
- [College of Medical and Dental Sciences](#)
- [College of Social Science](#)

Stand-alone resources

- [Guide to Effective Learning \(GEL\)](#)
- [Successfully transitioning to postgraduate studies](#)
- [Skills4Study Campus](#)

Feedback

Accessibility

Mathematics Support Centre

FindIt@Bham

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libguides.bham.ac.uk/asg