

Marking and Feedback Policy

Introduction

Marking is a central part of a teacher's role and can be integral to progress and attainment. Written responses offer a key way of providing feedback to students and helping teachers assess their students' understanding. Effective feedback given to students through marking and reviewing work will provide constructive steps for every student to ensure progress. It will focus on success and improvement needs against learning objectives and success criteria; enabling students to become reflective learners and helping them close the gap between current and desired performance. All marking should be driven by professional judgment and be meaningful, manageable, and motivating. Hence, this policy should be used as a guide that sets clear expectations in regard to the frequency and quality of marking and feedback. All teachers in all departments are urged to adhere to the guidelines in this policy.

Definition of Key Terms

Marking: the routine activity of reading, checking, monitoring, (when appropriate) correcting, and (where appropriate) giving a mark to students' written work.

Feedback: providing more detailed written guidance to the learner in order to help them improve their knowledge, skills, and understanding. Identifying clear and reasonable improvement targets is key in providing effective feedback.

Marking	Feedback
Summative	Formative
Assessment <i>of</i> Learning	Assessment <i>for</i> Learning
Measures Learning	Moves Learning forward
Directs Thinking	Provokes Thinking
Solves	Suggests
"You should ..."	"How could you ...?"

General Guidelines

- All **formative** assignments/assessments (quizzes, homework, class work, etc.) should be marked in **GREEN**.
- Feedback on all **formative** assignments/assessments (quizzes, homework, class work, etc.) should be given in **GREEN**.
- All teachers in all departments can use a check mark (✓) for correct answers and a cross mark (✗) for incorrect answers. This should also be done in **GREEN**.
- **In addition to the expectations set in this policy**, each department might have its own

marking and feedback procedures and strategies including but not limited to the use of subject-specific **rubrics** for self-, peer-, and teacher-evaluation.

- Teachers' marking and feedback **must** result in significant improvement in the students' performance; hence, students' response to teachers' feedback is crucial.

Marking

Marking students' work is part of all teachers' professional duty. Routinely reading, checking, and monitoring students' work connect teachers to their students' learning and ensure that students care about the work they produce. It shows students that teachers value their work and provides teachers with crucial on-going information about how well students are learning. It also enables teachers to monitor the completion of class-based and home learning tasks (class work and homework assignments). This kind of routine light marking should be regular, timely, and manageable.

Marking for Literacy

Given the increasing focus on the quality of written communication (QWC) in all examinations with a written component as well as the significance of literacy across curriculum, when and where appropriate, teachers should mark for literacy; for example, they should address misspelling of key terms, lowercase proper nouns, and other punctuation errors. If teachers do not correct grammar and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, and capitalization) in students' work, they give implicit authority to students to continue making the same mistakes.

In order to help with workload and establish consistency, teachers may wish to use a **Marking Sticker** for this kind of light marking. Instead of grades, teachers use the ICS proficiency scale (1-4) for marking students' work. Below is an example that can be customized as per the expectations of each department/subject. This policy urges ALL departments to mark for literacy as well.

ICS Marking Sticker	1	2	3	4
<i>Effort</i>				
<i>Presentation</i>				
<i>Content</i>				
<i>Grammar and Mechanics</i>				
<i>Overall</i>				
Date & Signature				

ICS Proficiency Scale

ICS Proficiency Scale			
Exemplary	4	97-100	A+
		93 -96	A
		90-92	A
Proficient	3	87-89	B+
		83 -86	B
		80 -82	B
		77-79	C+
Progressing	2	73-76	C
		70 -72	C
		67-69	D+
Beginning	1	65-66	D
		50-64	D
		Below 50	E/F

Feedback

Feedback is specific information given to the learner about their performance relative to learning objectives (WALT) and success criteria (WILF). It should aim to bring about and be capable of producing improvement in students' learning. Providing effective feedback is challenging. Whether written or verbal, feedback needs to highlight what has been done well and ask probing questions which provoke thinking and suggest next steps for improvement.

An integral part of providing constructive feedback is designing and sharing clear and meaningful success criteria with students. Effective success criteria:

- Are linked to the learning objective
- Are specific to an activity
- Are discussed and agreed with students prior to understanding the activity •

Provide a scaffold and focus for students while engaged in the activity • Are used as the basis for feedback and self-/peer-evaluation

Effective feedback can be used to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions that would have been taken in the

absence of that feedback. The outcomes of written and verbal feedback should be used by teachers to plan the next steps of learning and pitch the work appropriately for the class. This means that assessment is used to establish three things:

1. Where the learners are in their learning
2. Where they are going
3. How they will get there

Research suggests that feedback:

- Should be specific, accurate, and clear (e.g. “It was good because you...” rather than just “correct”)
- Should compare what a learner is doing right now with what they have done wrong before (e.g. “I can see you were focused on improving X as it is much better than last time’s Y...”)
- Should encourage and support further effort and be given sparingly so that it is meaningful
- Should provide specific guidance on how to improve, and not just tell students when they are wrong

Teachers can improve the quality of learning and make their marking and feedback a more streamlined process by raising the expectations for students before work is submitted to be marked. The following are some important steps:

1. **Do not accept substandard work.** We need to create and maintain a culture of challenge and high expectations in our classrooms. It is, therefore, important to communicate to students that we will not accept “sloppy” work. It may bring some logistical problems, but there are occasions where we could give a student a “redraft” deadline to improve the structure and presentation of their work. Of course, this relies on us knowing our students and what represents “sloppy” work for each of them.
2. **Proof reading and editing (by the students).** If we are going to be assessing a piece of written work, then it will be beneficial to give students time to proof-read and correct it. They may need dictionaries to check words they may have spelt incorrectly. They can also re-read their work so it flows and makes sense. This will cut down on the number of literacy corrections we need to make and can also lead to better content being handed in.
3. **Triple Impact Marking.** Before handing in their work, students could self-assess against the success criteria (WILF) for their task. These criteria might have been shared at the start of the task or only revealed once the work has been completed. Students then highlight the bits of work that they are proud of and explain how they have met the success criteria. The teacher then takes in the work and comments on the self-assessment of the student. The teacher then gives students a task based on the parts of the success criteria they did not meet (the task could be a redraft, a partial redraft, or something else completely). Students then complete the follow-up task. Alternatively, triple impact

marking could be self-assessment against success criteria, peer assessment against success criteria, and finally teacher assessment against success criteria.

4. **Students use a “pre-flight checklist” when completing their work.** It is clear that the provision of quality success criteria is key to effective assessment. The success criteria can be numbered and simply checked if met or crossed if requiring further attention – just like a pre-flight checklist. As well as being suitable for peer- and self-assessment, this technique takes up very little teacher time, whilst still leaving plenty of work for the student to do.

Recent studies also suggest that **careless mistakes** should be marked differently from **errors resulting from misunderstanding**. The latter may be best addressed by providing hints or questions which lead students to underlying principles; the former by simply marking the mistake as incorrect, without giving the right answer.

Marking Careless Mistakes and Errors Resulting from Misunderstanding	
Careless <u>Mistakes</u>	Simply marking the mistake as incorrect without giving the right answer
<u>Errors</u> Resulting from Misunderstanding	Providing hints or questions which lead students to underlying principles

Analysis of the research has informed four ground rules for giving effective written feedback:

1. Written feedback should result in more work for students than it does for teachers. 2. Written feedback should have a meaningful impact on learning. If learning happens when we think hard, feedback should seek to provoke thought. Therefore, it should provide hints and clues but make students work for ‘the answer’.

3. Written feedback should be given sparingly so that it is meaningful.

✓ Too frequent written feedback can create dependence.

✓ Too infrequent written feedback can lead to demotivation and frustration. 4.

Written feedback should not be accompanied by a grade, as this seems to interfere with students’ ability to act on instructional feedback. Students tend to disregard written feedback if there is a grade accompanying it.

Why Feedback?

There are perhaps only three reasons that make giving feedback worthwhile:

1. **To provide clarity** – most mistakes are made because students are unclear on precisely what they should be doing. Providing feedback that points out misconceptions and provides clarification is an essential first step. If we don’t get this right, all else is for naught.
2. **To get students to increase effort** – trying harder is usually of huge benefit. Getting students to understand what they should be doing is hard enough, but motivating them to

actually do it is the master skill.

3. **To get students to increase aspiration** – there's certainly some merit in overlearning concepts and practicing to the point that errors are eliminated, but feedback may not be necessary to achieve this. But once a goal has been met or exceeded, students need to aim for something more challenging. No challenge means no mistakes, and no mistakes means that feedback is unlikely to be useful.

If we understand which of these purposes we want to be engaged in, our feedback might be a lot more useful and a lot more likely to produce the desired results. As always, if we deal satisfactorily with the **why**, we are much better placed to think about **how**.

Feedback That Moves Learning forward

In order to ensure that feedback moves learning forward, where possible feedback should be phrased as questions and students should be given time and space to respond to and act on their feedback. Effective feedback makes students think about their learning. It also helps them see that learning is incremental rather than fixed. To support learning, areas for improvement are often more effective if they are expressed as questions: 'Could you give an example?', 'What else does this make you think of?', 'How does this compare with...?' Teachers should not be providing students with the answer but expecting them to think and to refine their work as a result.

Directed Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT)

Once feedback has been posed in the form of carefully crafted questions, students need to be enabled to respond. When giving feedback, therefore, teachers should offer students time to reflect critically on how to craft and improve their work and then to develop new techniques to put their feedback into practice. A dialogue is opened up with students about their feedback, and teachers offer time and space for this to happen. For ease of reference and the sake of consistency, this time and space within our lessons is labeled as Directed Improvement and Reflection Time, or **DIRT**.




Effective Use of DIRT to Develop More Disciplined Learners

1. **Reflect critically** – students are expected to spend approximately twice their time reflecting on their feedback as teachers have devoted to giving it. This is most effective when done individually, in silence.
2. **Developing techniques** – although DIRT is about independent reflection, teacher guidance is crucial. Teachers should model and scaffold to exemplify the feedback they have given and show students how to improve.
3. **Crafting and improving** - As well as encouraging students to critically reflect on their feedback, DIRT can also be effectively used for crafting and improving work. This allows students to immediately apply their feedback and put the techniques into practice.

To support this process, we have designed a **Feedback Sticker** to structure this feedback. The sticker has been designed for two reasons: to provide an effective reminder of how feedback should be structured and to limit how much feedback teachers should be writing.

ICS Feedback Sticker	
Strengths:	Areas for further development:
Directed Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT)	

The feedback sticker below is a modified version of the above sticker to suit lower grades (K-5).

ICS Feedback Sticker			
			
			
How can you do even better?			

No DIRT means no gap is closed and learning has not moved forward. This means the time teachers have spent marking students' work is wasted time. Often, 15 minutes can be sufficient for DIRT, although sometimes teachers may dedicate a whole period to it, for example if a significant piece of written work is being redrafted. Of course our curriculum time is limited and teachers have to teach all of the content. However, without giving up time for DIRT, teachers

pick up errors/omissions/misconceptions and comment on them without allowing students to address them. In other words, teachers flag up a learning gap, but they do not give students the opportunity to bridge it. Closing this gap in learning needs to be prioritized.

What Should Students Be Doing during DIRT?

There are many different tasks that students can do during DIRT. It depends on what they got wrong or missed out in their assessed work. The following list is by no means exhaustive:

- Setting improvement targets / next steps in learning
- Redrafting of a whole piece of work
- Redrafting of a section of the work
- Redoing something (for example a graph)
- Answering a question / questions
- Editing.

What Might Efficient, Effective Written Feedback Look Like?

The process of writing out comments is laborious, repetitive, and time-consuming. Many experienced teachers do this by anticipating the kinds of comments they would need to write in books/on work, making a list of these predictions, and assigning each a number. When you encounter a situation where one of your pre-prepared comments needs applying, simply write the assigned number instead. Where possible it can help if the ‘comment’ is phrased as a question (this has the twin advantages of being more palatable for students to read and inviting them to consider possible answers: How could you...? Why did you...? Is there another way to...? etc.) Then, when you return the work to the students, simply display the comments along with the relevant number and ask the students to write out the comments themselves. For example:

1. How could you use verbs to change the effect of this sentence?
2. How might you avoid starting each sentence with ‘I’ or ‘The’?
3. Can you find a way of rewriting these sentences without ‘and’ or ‘but’?
4. How could you vary your sentence structure here?
5. How else could you connect this paragraph?
6. What vocabulary could you use here instead? Suggest three other examples.

Alternatively, this process can be realized by noting down the different comments as you work your way through a set of responses. If you come across a mistake or misconception you hadn’t anticipated, simply add it to the list. Some teachers using this method prefer to use symbols rather than numbers. As well as saving time, this method also increases the likelihood students will process your feedback as they are recording it. Of course, after writing out your feedback, students need to be given time to respond. As they do this, you could take the opportunity to talk to them about their work: “I was really pleased to see that you...” or “Can you tell me why you

didn't...?" or "I'm not happy about..." This time for conversation is the space where relationships are forged and epiphanies sometimes happen.

Other Valuable Types of Feedback

Verbal Feedback

The type of feedback students get on their work varies according to the subject. In drama, PE, art, and music, for example, much of the feedback will be verbal. In fact much of the best feedback in all subjects is verbal whilst the students are working. When verbal feedback is given about written work, a **Verbal Feedback Sticker** might be used to record this. In this case, the student should summarize the feedback given around the stamp.


What's good about this strategy?

- It's quick and effortless.
- It can be highly regular.
- It gives a higher profile to the verbal feedback that students receive.
- It allows them to log and record their own personalized improvement strategies.

It makes teachers think about the verbal feedback they give.

- It gives a purpose to the feedback teachers give.
- It makes the student respond to the feedback and engages them more in their own learning.

To support this process, we have designed a Verbal Feedback Sticker to structure this feedback.

 Date: _____ Signature: _____	Summarize the feedback given by the teacher.	What should I do to improve my work?

Self and Peer Marking/Assessment (Feedback)

Self and peer assessment or feedback should also be a regular part of classroom practice. Using self and peer feedback as part of a culture of critique within the classroom can have a

transformational effect on learning, particularly if students are given time to act on and use it. Peer feedback should be modeled as part of a culture of classroom critique which is **kind**, **specific** and **helpful**.

When peer assessing, students need to stick to the following three rules:

1. **Be kind:** All comments should focus entirely on the work. No personal comments at all. No sarcasm or put downs. The comments can be challenging but the creator of the work should feel that the feedback is work oriented and be happy to receive it. ‘Hard on content, soft on people.’
2. **Be specific:** Refined and precise dialogue with detailed explanations on positives and steps to improve. Comments should explain exactly what needs to be worked on (like a set of instructions) which the writer can simply take away and use. The success criteria need to be referred to.
3. **Be helpful:** If the comments don't benefit the work, the learning, the learners or the class, then don't share it. Everything you provide feedback on is there to help make the work better.

There is a clear distinction between self or peer **marking** and self or peer **assessment**. Self or peer marking is when students (or their peers) check and mark work which is either **right or wrong**. This could be answers to questions, a cloze exercise, or a math problem like addition. It makes sense in terms of instant feedback to the students (and the teacher) to ask students to mark this type of work themselves. Self or peer assessment on the other hand is when students (or their peers) assess a piece of work against explicit success criteria (WILF). This is similar to how we as teachers would assess their work against these criteria during book marking. Self and peer assessment is a very valuable process because by sharing and exemplifying success criteria, we are sharing what excellence looks like. The success criteria may have been given by the teacher or co-constructed in discussion with the class (co-negotiation of success criteria). The students are not the experts when it comes to assessment. This is why the process must be crystal clear and explicitly modeled. This process must be constantly reinforced so students are clear what the success criteria are and what constitutes “success” against the success criteria. It is a good idea for a “dummy” piece of work to be displayed on the board to be critiqued by the teacher (in discussion with the class) against the success criteria. This modeling process will help students understand why and how to assess.

Students may not always understand and value peer and self-assessment, so we must clearly communicate why we are doing it. It is not to save us time because we don't have to mark the work (although this is true!). We ask them to peer and self-assess to give them instant feedback, to give them the opportunity to see their peers' work (sharing excellence), and to help them see what meeting success criteria actually looks like so they can build this into their future learning.

























The main issue with peer assessment is that some students will give better feedback than others. One way around this is to have students' work assessed (against the success criteria) by at least three of their peers. This gives a number of benefits:

- Students get to see more than just one piece of work. This means they are more likely to

see excellent work.

- Students get feedback from a number of their peers, and even if one student has struggled to give specific feedback, there should be something more constructive from one of the other assessors.
- Students get to see how others have peer assessed, and this extra modeling should help in how they assess (just watch that they don't copy what others have written).

Examples of Self- and Peer-Assessment Rubrics

Check My Writing	Me	My Partner Name: _____
My sentences and all proper nouns start with a capital letter.	  	  
Every sentence ends with a period, question mark, or exclamation point.	  	  
I did my best at spelling. There are no spelling mistakes.	  	  
I used my neatest handwriting, and my work is easy to read.	  	  
I used finger spaces between words.		
My story makes sense to me and others.		
My goal for the next writing is _____ _____ _____		

Check My Writing Name: _____			
All my sentences and proper nouns start with a capital letter. All my sentences have the right end punctuation mark (./?!).			
I don't have any spelling mistakes and my handwriting is very neat.			
I have written a variety of sentence types (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex AND declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory).			
I have used enough / the right transition words to connect sentences (coordinating and subordinating conjunctions).			
I have avoided run-on sentences, comma splices, and fragments.			
My ideas are original, well thought out, organized, coherent, and not redundant.			
My goal for the next writing is _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____			

Progress Tracking Sticker

In all curriculum areas, students should be provided with progress sheets, which track learners' progress. The design of these sheets is unique to each curriculum or subject area, but they should give students a clear understanding of how well they are making progress, how well they are achieving in relation to the standards expected, and how they might improve. The **Progress Tracking Sticker** has been designed for this purpose:

Progress Tracking Sticker (Full Year Courses)

Target	How Am I Doing?	How Can I Improve?
Fall (Early October)		
Winter (Early January)		
Spring (Early April)		

Progress Tracking Sticker (Half Year Courses)

Target	How Am I Doing?	How Can I Improve?
After Week 4 Date:		
After Week 8 Date:		
After Week 12 Date:		

Frequency of Marking and Feedback

The frequency of marking and feedback will depend on the curriculum time allocated to each subject and the frequency of lessons. However, as a general rule teachers should adhere to the following guidelines:

Frequency Per Semester (According to the Number of Allocated Periods)

	Marking	Written Feedback	Verbal Feedback	Self Assessment (Feedback)	Peer Assessment (Feedback)	Progress Tracking
1 or 2 Periods Per Week	5 Times Per Semester	3 Times Per Semester	Ongoing (Minimum 3 Times)	Ongoing (Minimum 3 Times)	Ongoing (Minimum 3 Times)	• 3 Times a Year / Semester
3 or 4 Periods Per Week	10 Times Per Semester	5 Times Per Semester	Ongoing (Minimum 5 Times)	Ongoing (Minimum 5 Times)	Ongoing (Minimum 5 Times)	• 3 Times a Year / Semester
Over 4 Periods a Week	15 Times Per Semester	8 Times Per Semester	Ongoing (Minimum 8 Times)	Ongoing (Minimum 8 Times)	Ongoing (Minimum 8 Times)	• 3 Times a Year / Semester

Curriculum and subject leaders, deputy heads of departments, and heads of departments are responsible for setting and monitoring the quality and frequency of feedback from teachers working within their team. This will be set out in their departmental policies or handbooks.

Sadly there is no magic formula for marking efficiently whilst providing effective feedback, but there are plenty of interesting findings to inform this policy moving forwards. The following findings in terms of giving written feedback may be useful for teachers to bear in mind.

- Whole-class verbal feedback is an efficient system for managing student progress between assessments.
- Using Marking Stickers is an efficient way of acknowledging students' work.
- Using Feedback Stickers forces a limitation on the amount of feedback teachers need to write, and may therefore be a more efficient way of providing written feedback.
- Using coded or numbered feedback may reduce the time taken to write out targets. Research suggests that there is no difference between the effectiveness of coded or uncoded feedback, provided that students understand what the codes mean.
- Limiting the number of targets given to students (to e.g. two at a time) is more time efficient and avoids cognitive overload for the students processing them.
- Using explicit success criteria (WILF) in setting and marking assignments can be more efficient because it makes marking more selective and meaningful.

From the Eye of an Inspector/Auditor

The following points are what the inspectors/auditors will consider and pay particular attention to during their scrutiny of students' work:

1. Students' effort and success in completing their work, both in and outside lessons, so that they can progress and enjoy learning across the curriculum
2. How students' knowledge, skills, and understanding (KSU) have developed and improved over time
3. The level of challenge and whether students have to grapple appropriately with content, not necessarily "getting it right" first time, which could be evidence that the work is too easy
4. How well teachers' feedback, written and verbal, is used by students to improve their knowledge, skills, and understanding.