

Title: **Feedback experiences of post graduate students: making the transition**

Presenters: **Helen Boulton and Alison Hramiak**
Nottingham Trent University and Sheffield Hallam University

Session Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Consider the range of feedback experienced by students on post-graduate courses.
- Reflect on both staff and student perceptions of feedback and engagement with feedback at M level.
- Explore different forms of feedback from a range of institutions.
- Consider the nature and validity of their own types of feedback at M level.

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

This paper links to the conference theme 'student transition' focussing on feedback and frameworks for supporting post graduate students in engaging with feedback.

Much has been researched and written about transitions within higher education at undergraduate level in terms of feedback but as yet there is very little in the literature that reflects on the transition to post graduate study in this respect (Tobbell, O'Donnell, & Zammit, 2010). This may be a result of student age and level of study, with the assumption being made that by the time students reach post graduate level they are no longer in need of as great a level of support as they were when they first entered higher education. Indeed it is reported by academic staff that PG students are often perceived as 'expert' students which may not result in the transition support identified in research for undergraduate students (Tobbell et al., 2010).

This discussion paper will report findings from a collaborative study between Nottingham Trent University and Sheffield Hallam University to address this gap focusing specifically on feedback at taught post graduate level (respondents = 201). The study also investigated the perceptions of tutors on the use of feedback by the students.

Theoretically, this research is underpinned by assessment for learning (Gardner, 2006) and develops the principles of good feedback practice to facilitate self-regulation identified by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006).

An analysis of the full data sets, including student comment, from the research will be presented at the conference along with an opportunity to engage with others in a discussion on what post-graduate students experiences of feedback are and which feedback engages them most. The results of the research indicate that the most common forms of feedback at PG level are tutorial, audio, written group, written individual, verbal group and verbal 1:1; again full data will be shared in the presentation.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

15	Presentation of the findings of our research which identifies the different types of feedback and which types of feedback post-graduate students find most useful/engage with the most.
25	<p>Opportunity for discussion in group(s), depending on size, providing an opportunity to share the experiences of others. To focus on:</p> <p>Drawing out different forms of feedback from the group and how these engage students.</p> <p>Discussion of policy and practice with the emphasis on drawing out lessons from the group to share with others.</p> <p>What frameworks do we need to provide for colleagues in considering different forms of feedback?</p> <p>What strategies are we using to ensure feedback is inclusive?</p> <p>Flip chart to record responses.</p>
5	Plenary and final questions, thoughts, and the way forward for individuals – shared on a flip chart.

References

- Gardner, J. (Ed.). (2006). *Assessment and Learning*. London: Sage Publications.
- Nicol, D and Macfarlane-Dick, D (2006) Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice, *Studies in Higher Education* Vol. 31, No. 2, pp. 199–218
- Tobbell, J., O'Donnell, V., & Zammit, M. (2010). Exploring transition to postgraduate study: shifting identities in interaction with communities, practice and participation. *British Educational Research Journal (BERJ)*, 36(2), 261-278.