

# Providing Feedback on Performance: Student Staff and Volunteers

## General Feedback Tips

- ☐ **Create a welcoming environment**  
This will improve communication and help students to feel more comfortable with reflection and receiving feedback.
- ☐ **Be prepared for the conversation**  
Plan what you will say ahead of time – use something like the following B.E.A.R model to prepare.
- ☐ **Base the feedback in clear expectations**  
Outline expectations at the beginning of the role, so that when providing feedback later, you can connect it back to those expectations.
- ☐ **Establish a mutual commitment**  
Ask the student about their commitment to their performance and skill development, and share your commitment to support the student's goals.
- ☐ **Acknowledge the positives**  
Be specific about skills the student is using successfully to reinforce the continued use of these skills and to celebrate successes.
- ☐ **Encourage a growth mindset**  
Discuss the value of mistakes as learning opportunities by encouraging reflection and practice as a means of developing skills over time.
- ☐ **Be specific about what can be improved/ changed**  
Provide feedback on skills that can be improved, giving specific examples you have observed when performance didn't meet standards, or where they students' skills are adequate but could be further improved.
- ☐ **Ask the student for their perspective on your feedback**  
They may provide additional insights into their skills after hearing your feedback which can help you assess whether they have understood your feedback, and that you have understood their perspective.

## Feedback Model: B.E.A.R

Use this model to **plan your feedback** conversation ahead of time and to help guide the conversation. Remember that you want the feedback conversation to be welcoming and organic; use your notes as required, but don't be tied too closely to your "script". Perhaps start the conversation with a simple check-in – take the time to make your student feel comfortable and heard.

### **B**ehaviour

- Name the issue that needs to be corrected or positively reinforced
- Outline all details to describe behaviour accurately: who, what, when

Provide student with an opportunity to talk about their interpretation of the behaviour and/or situation

*"I've noticed that you often wait until the day or two before the deadline to start your tasks. For example, I asked you to lead last week's team meeting and present your work plan to the team. You completed everything by the meeting, however I had asked to review the work plan prior to the meeting and to approve the agenda in time for it to be circulated before the meeting, which is our normal process for team meetings. Can we talk about the reasons why these documents weren't ready in time for me to review? Was there anything else going on that prevented you from getting started on them earlier? This is a great opportunity for us to discuss strategies for time management and prioritizing tasks."*

### **E**ffects

- Describe the effects of the behavior
- Explain why the behaviour should be changed/ improved or continued

*"Tasks and projects in this office are generally a collaborative effort. Even something like a work plan gets reviewed by multiple members on the team – this process helps us see the relationship between our own work tasks and the tasks of other team members and/or projects. By getting tasks started early, it provides time for both the review process and any changes that might need to be made before the deadline. Leaving things closer to the deadline cuts down on that time, which can impact the time frame left for other team members to review. It really helps everyone's workflow when we plan out the time it will take to complete tasks that require collaboration."*

## **A lternative** *\*use when identifying behaviors to change (skip if identifying positive behaviours\*)*

- What could have been done differently?
- Brainstorm ideas to change the behavior in the future – ask the student to contribute their thoughts about future strategies

*“Your work plan has a lot of tasks listed on it, but it doesn’t account for all the steps required to complete each task. What thoughts do you have for new ways you could approach this in the future? {student response} Those are great ideas. Another might be for each task you’re assigned, you could try jotting down all the steps that you think will have to be completed before the deadline – based on those steps and the time it will take to complete each one, you could set personal deadlines that will help you meet the final deadline. Let’s use the work plan and meeting agenda as an example.”*

## **R esult**

- Determine the goal of this feedback and set expectations for future behavior
- Outline the short-term and long-term results of changing or continuing the behavior

*“When you try these strategies in the future, what impact do you think they could have? {student response} Thanks for those thoughts, they are great and will be very appreciated in the team. Also, I think that by starting and finishing tasks ahead of the deadline, a sense of professionalism will be communicated. You’re not just a student, but an employee who is efficient and diligently completes tasks. Completing tasks in advance of the deadline also provides you with a buffer room for corrections, review, and preparation.”*

## **Additional Resources**

[Integrating Academic and Career Development](#), EAB, Academic Affairs Forum

[Receiving and Giving Effective Feedback](#), University of Waterloo, Centre for Teaching Excellence

[The Art of Feedback: Giving, Seeking and Receiving Feedback](#), Australian Capital Territory Performance Framework

## **References:**

Harvard Business School Press. (2006). *Giving Feedback: Expert Solutions to Everyday Challenges*. Boston, Massachusetts.

*Receiving and Giving Effective Feedback*. Centre for Teaching Excellence, University of Waterloo. [Accessed 2017: <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence>]