

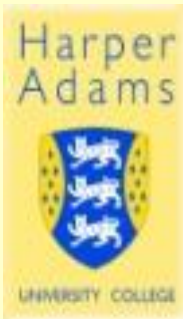
# Teaching and Learning Forum

Nicky Hunter

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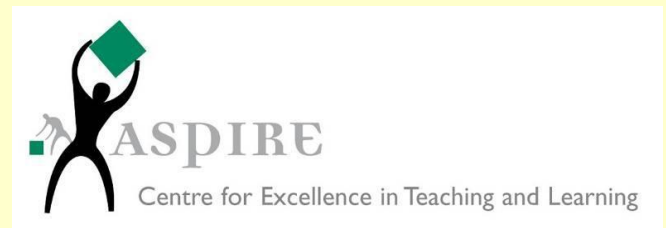
September 2010





# Aspire Development Fellowship

*What is the range of assessment feedback provided by staff at Harper Adams University College and to what extent does the feedback help students to feed forward and improve their educational or learning skills?*



# What do the students say?

## **National Students Surveys (2008)**

highlighting general dissatisfaction with 'complaints of ambiguity, lateness and negativity' with 57% of students in most University departments expressing dissatisfaction with the standard of feedback they are receiving.

# Importance of feedback to students with SpLDs

- Good feedback with clear breakdown of marks  
→ accessible to all
- Constructive feedback essential
- Terminology needs to be easily understood
- Lack of confidence to arrange to see tutor to discuss feedback if not clear – feeling of vulnerability

# The proposed research programme aims were to:

- Assess the quantity of feedback at HAUC (too much/too little?)
- Assess the quality of feedback (does this help the students progress and is it supportive?)
- Explore the range of support processes that students experience following the launch of assignment work and if this enhances the work they submit.
- Assess the timeliness of feedback in allowing the students to improve other work submitted for formative assessment.

# The research

**Research:** All students, staff and modules were confidential

**Timescale:** September 2009 – June 2010

- 38 students volunteered from all course areas and levels from ExFdSc to Masters
- Initial survey of feedback experience
- Submission of assignments and comments on each assignment feedback given: **248 – 264** responses to each question on feedback
- Two focus group meetings
- One to one interviews

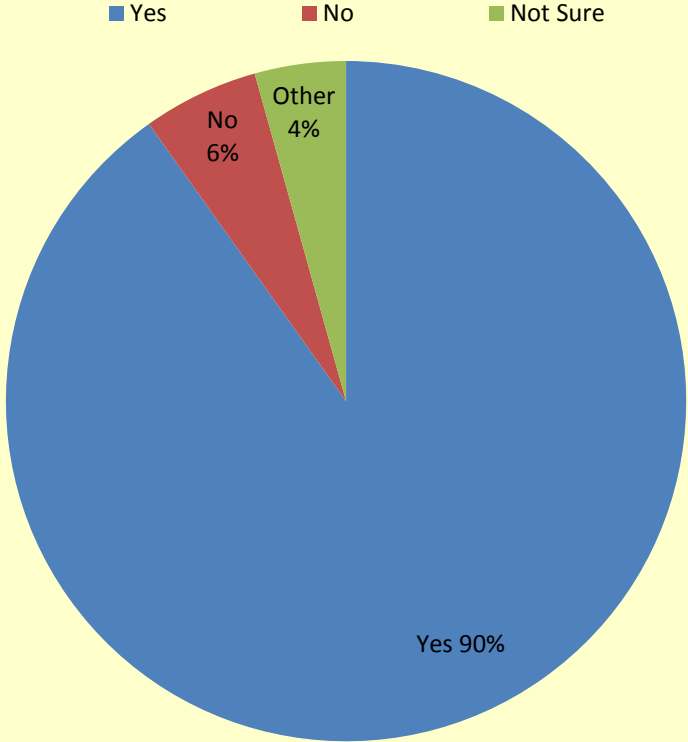
**Prior to the study, the most important factors of feedback which students identified in motivation and improving their learning skills and the quality of their work were....**

- Quick delivery of feedback and understanding what the tutor has said.
- Understanding where marks have been allocated and the marking criteria.
- Indication of strengths and weaknesses in the submitted work to support learning.

# What did we ask the students?

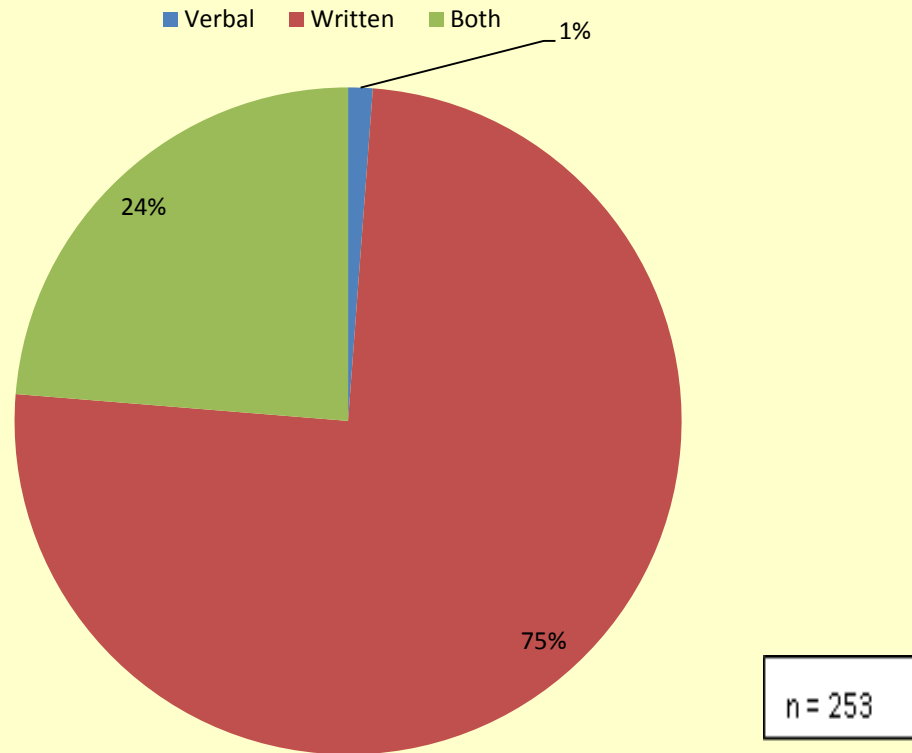
1. Did you understand the assignment brief?
2. Did you go to staff for help?
3. Did you go to learner support for help?
4. Was the feedback verbal, written or both?
  - Was the feedback easy to read?
  - Did you understand it?
  - Do you think the comments were fair?
  - Will the feedback help you next time?
5. Is it clear how the marks have been allocated?
6. Were comments made on report structure/referencing etc
7. Suggestions on how the feedback helped or could have helped you better

# Did you understand the assignment brief?



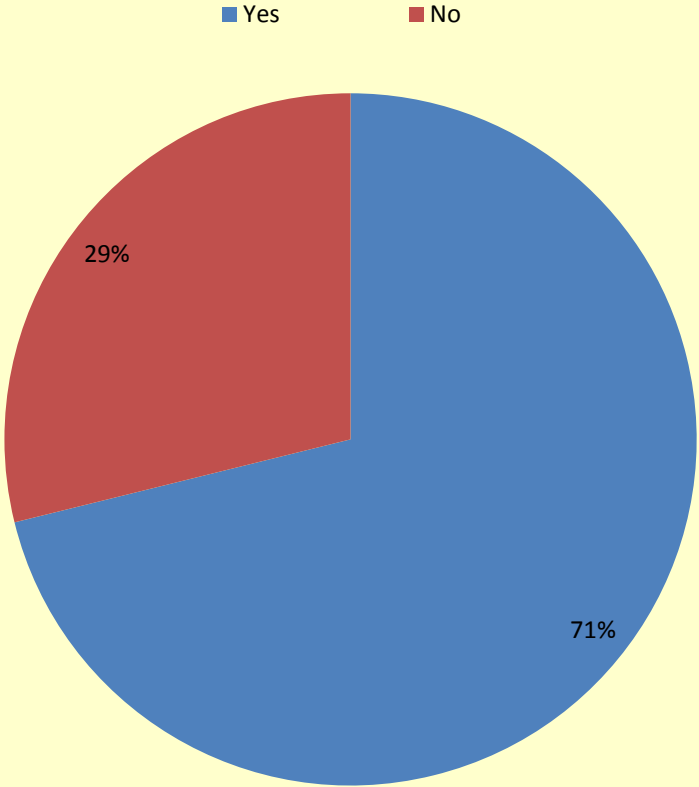
n = 254

# What was the type of feedback given?



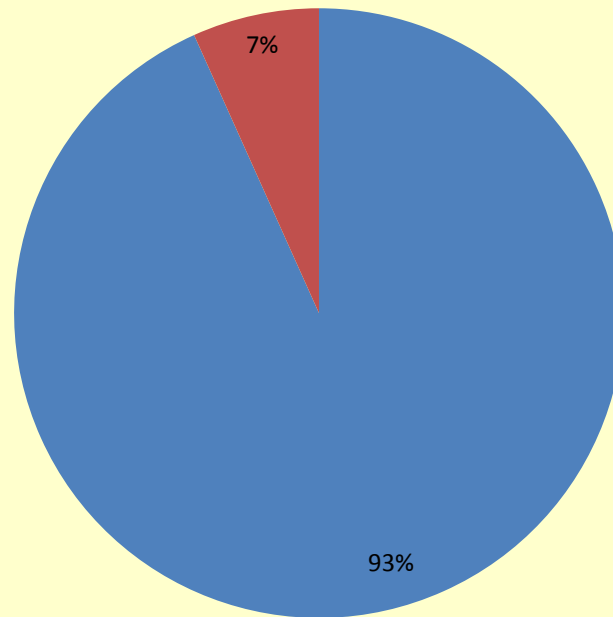
# Was the written feedback easy to read?

-



# Did you understand the feedback given?

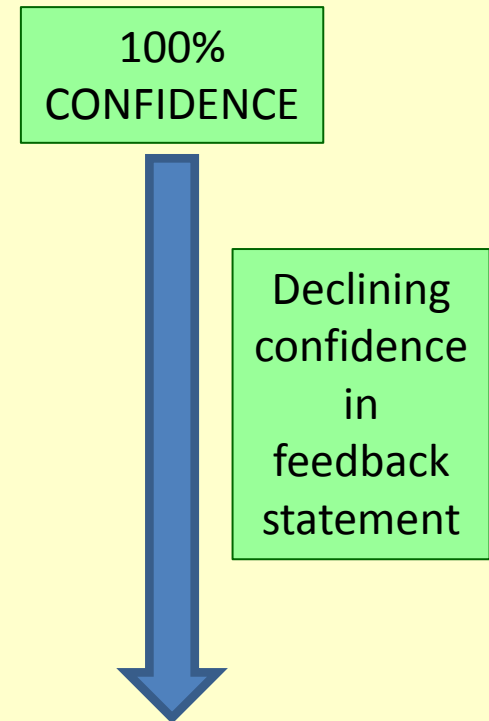
■ Yes ■ No



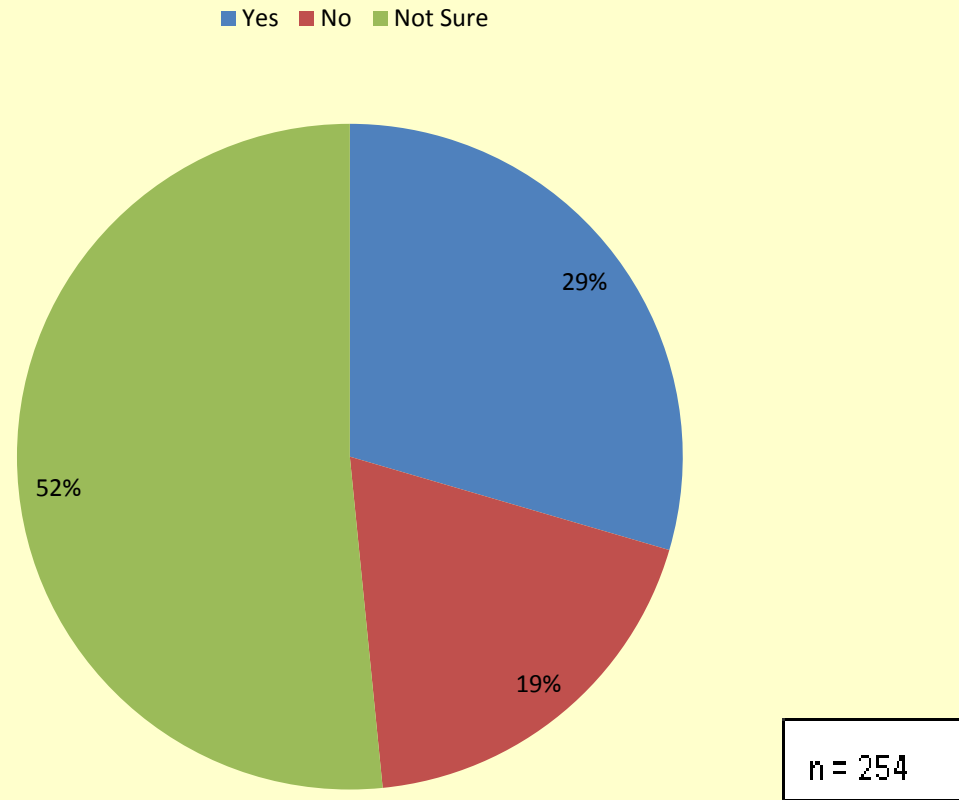
n = 253

# The language used in feedback is sometimes confusing to the student

- Logical and coherent structure
- Key concepts indentified
- Too descriptive
- More critical reflection needed
- Lacks application of theory
- Underpinning theory
- Superficial analysis



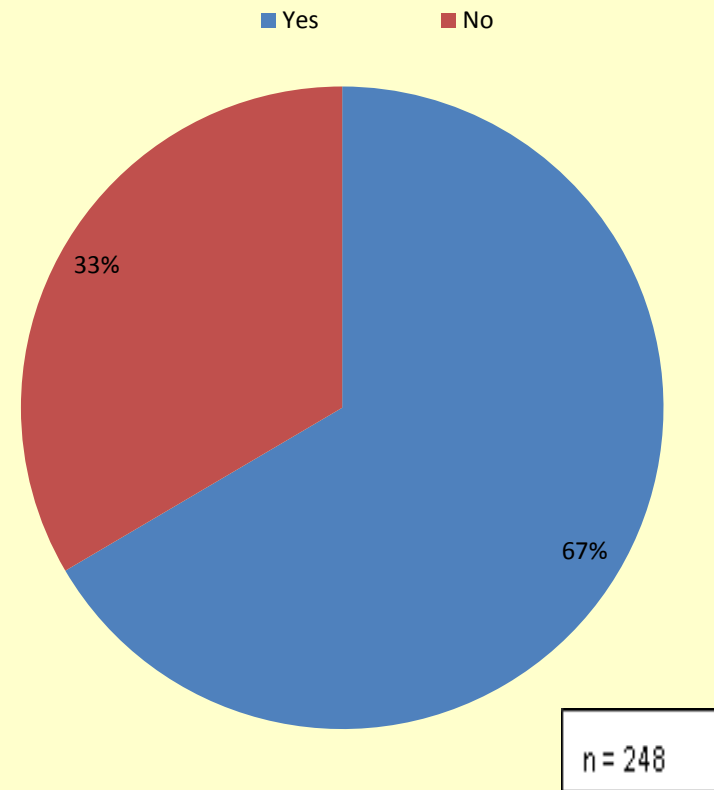
# Is it clear how the marks have been allocated?



# Will your feedback help you in the future?

## Reasons for not using feedback

- *Unreadable and unintelligible feedback.*
- *Comments do not indicate the ways that the students could improve future work.*
- *Feedback may be very specific and topic related and less generic, so the learner cannot apply the feedback to feedforward.*



# Summary

## Issues for some students at Harper

- Clarity of feedback (particularly legibility)
- Indication in the feedback of how to feed forward (for learning not of learning)
- Timeliness of feedback
- Relating the feedback to clear mark allocation

# Recommendations

- **Include for students**  
‘What is feedback and how to use it’ in the Academic Development module
- **Develop staff guidelines** on best practice for student feedback - there are some excellent examples from other HEIs
- Use of **generic class feedback** via email/VLE to highlight common problems etc and indicate the range of marks.

# NUS advice that feedback.....

Should be for  
learning, not of  
learning

Should be a  
continuous process

Should be timely

Should relate to  
clear criteria

Should be  
constructive

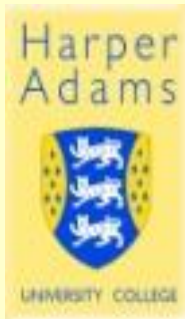
Should be legible &  
clear

Should be provided  
on exams

Should include self  
assessment and  
peer feedback

Should be  
accessible to all  
students

Should be flexible  
and suitable to the  
needs of students



# Thanks to....

- ✓ **Aspire** for financial support and guidance
- ✓ **Sarah Gabbitas** for help with interviews and data collation
- ✓ **Tricia Cox** for Admin support
- ✓ And most of all **the students** who volunteered their time and comments for this research

