

## **The first draft**

This section covers supporting the submission of the first draft and your responsibilities in relation to providing feedback on the first draft.

These include:

- Developing and using a checklist
- Guidelines for providing quality feedback
- Guidelines for the essay return meeting

### **What does this mean for this section?**

The requirements of submitting the first draft and the final version of the extended are very similar. By establishing the same procedure on both occasions it will assist the student immensely at this stressful moment in their final year. The extra requirements for the final submission will be dealt with in the next module

## **Submission of the first draft**

*This activity is designed to enable participants to develop a key support resource.*

### **What should I do if the first draft is ready to be submitted?**

#### **Writing a checklist**

Another suggestion put forward by many experienced supervisors involves a checklist for the first draft and the final presentation copy.

There are many variations of the checklist:

- The first and most basic form of the checklist is one that is used by the student to guide them when presenting their first draft.
- The supervisor when reading through the first draft can use a similar checklist. This can be a little more sophisticated involving the dimensions of critical analysis, historical judgement and historical understanding.
- Both of these checklists can be used again, with some appropriate adjustments, for the final presentation copy.

They should include the following examples:

#### **Checking references and bibliographies**

It is advisable to remind your students before the date for handing in the first draft that you do expect correct referencing and so on and remind them how to do it.

### **Word count**

This restriction is strictly enforced. Examiners are told not to read or mark beyond the 4,000 words if this is exceeded.

## **Resource development activity: The first draft checklist**

### **Resource development activity**

#### **What does a checklist look like?**

As you progress through this PD module, you can determine what you would like to include in this checklist. Feel free to use the discussion forum to establish the key elements of a checklist.

This checklist can have two versions: one for the student and one for the supervisor.

The supervisor's version can include reminders to ensure all relevant information is communicated to the student, also room for individual checks for students who it already been determined require specific feedback.

#### **Activity objective:**

Participants will:

- design a checklist to guide students when submitting their first draft for feedback

### **Instructions - Resource development activity**

#### **Actions required: Complete the following resource development activity**

1. Read the relevant topics in this module.
2. Determine what you would like a student to ensure before handing you the first draft.
3. Writing up a resource for student distribution

**Outcome:** A series of resources to support the response to the first draft

# **The first draft: what is good, quality feedback?**

## **What should feedback on the first draft achieve?**

You will have given a date for the first draft to be handed to you. No doubt some students will seek help and encouragement during the period they are writing it, while others will go away and appear with it on the appointed day. Each of these students should have a clear idea of what they must achieve with the first draft. This goal should be established by you before this feedback stage begins to ensure they are working towards the required goal.

## **A checklist as a support mechanism**

It is a good idea to provide all your students with a checklist of what the first draft must have included to ensure the meeting is as productive as possible. This provides you with a mechanism to guide the meeting, allowing the student to clearly identify the actions that should come out of the meeting. An almost identical second checklist can also be used to support the final submission. This will be a focus in the final PD module. As a start you should ensure that your students include in their submission the following elements:

- research question
- contents page
- page numbers
- correct and consistent reference notes
- conclusion
- bibliography
- abstract.

## **Comments: verbal or written?**

Some supervisors, to ensure they do not overly annotate the essay, type up comments on a separate sheet of paper and use this to structure their discussion with the student. They can then use this as the basis of a follow-up email to add any comments or clarifications that result from their reflections after the meeting has ended. The supervisor is also establishing a record of the discussion.

## **What about the abstract?**

Please note: the abstract should not be written until the essay has been completed. Do not ask the students to engage with this task just yet.

# Defining quality feedback

## What does quality feedback involve?

This is a very important part of your responsibilities as a supervisor, and is essentially a rather delicate operation. Without heavily annotating the draft, you have to indicate faults, explain how the essay can be improved, and also avoid discouraging the student. In other words, tact and a thorough knowledge of the criteria are essential!

## Should it require a formal interview? Should it involve other teachers as well?

You will of course have to read the essay before meeting the student to discuss it. You must not annotate it heavily, as this would be rewriting it for the student, and constitute your work, rather than theirs.

## What should the feedback focus on?

On the question of feedback, one supervisor suggested that

*"Once students have completed the first draft and I've had time to read it, we once again meet. At this point, I go through the main issues that I've found. In general, most of the discussion is on the appropriateness of the research question (does it still fit or make sense, now that the research is done?), whether or not the paper is organized in a manner to answer the research question, if the evidence is relevant and helps answer the research question, and if the analysis is consistent. "*

It might seem strange to return to the issue of the research question at this stage of the extended essay but often a student has consciously, unconsciously, or inadvertently developed an answer to a slightly different research question. As this supervisor suggests, having established that the research question is still relevant or made an adjustment, the feedback should focus on the basic elements of the extended essay such as the quality of the research, the selection of evidence and the construction of the argument.

## An overview from the senior examiners

The senior examiners consulted during the development of this workshop wanted to stress the following points.

They noted that the essays submitted in each session seem to produce their own collective weaknesses. The most recent ones-some old, others newer are:

Essays with

- no research question and poor titles
- unsuitable and/or, too wide topics
- too long introductions

- weak and inconsistent referencing
- essays with only quotations referenced
- bibliographies not listed correctly,
- lack of focus for example, the essay answers a different question
- essays which exceed the word limit, and lie about it.

These comments provide a sound basis for establishing the parameters of your feedback.

### **Three possible dimensions to providing quality feedback**

1. Make notes on a separate sheet of paper and give the student as much oral advice as is necessary. For example, you can note if there are no page numbers, or insufficient reference notes, and you must plan how to explain to the student how to rectify these and other weaknesses and problems.

2. Consider and comment on the draft from the point of view of the following:

- Narrative
- Description
- Analysis

3. When necessary, provide suggestions on how you advise the student on adopting a more analytical approach.

## **Strategy development: First draft feedback meeting**

### **Strategy development: Planning your feedback on the first draft**

The feedback on the first draft involves responding to the first draft and also providing advice to the student on how to develop the essay further.

Developing a strategy outline for this providing this feedback will involve the following:

- identifying a list of actions that should happen *before*, *during*, and *after* (both short term and long term) this meeting
- identifying the resources required for your reference and the students
- identifying possible issues that might arise and determine appropriate responses.

### **Developing a strategy outline**

#### **What is a strategy outline?**

A strategy outline is a self-constructed support resource where a teacher who is encountering a new role and associated responsibilities can identify and plan the options for action as part of their decision making process. It is designed to include the

implications of an action in relation to aspects in their professional performance. A strategy outliner is therefore intended to provide the teacher with a support mechanism.

In other words, a strategy outline provides you as a professional in a demanding role with a reference resource for planning meetings and interactions with your students. It enables you to capture and detail the aims and objectives of the meeting, resources required, possible activities that can be involved in the meeting, and the follow up required. This increases the quality of your interactions with students, reduces the preparation time and provides you with an ongoing overview and checklist of the student's progress, especially if related to a performance contract and timeline.

Strategy outlines ensure you are fully prepared for the meeting each time and can be improved upon as you find or develop new resources and activities. The **Learning Pathway**, to be introduced in Topic 3.3, can also be implemented via your strategy outlines. They also provide you with the opportunity to reflect upon your teaching practices and implement improvements, if appropriate.

### **Guiding questions:**

- What are the communication goals for the meeting?
  - How do you intend to achieve these?
- What outcomes do I want from this meeting?
  - What is the timeframe for these subsequent actions?
- What common concerns will a student have regarding this meeting and its goals/outcomes?
- What common difficulties does a student face regarding these goals/outcomes?
- What has already been communicated to the student?
- Should anyone else be involved in the meeting or be informed of the meeting?
- What activities might support the meeting's goals and outcomes?
- What follow up is required, and by whom, from the meeting?
- What resource will I use during this meeting?

A complementary resource is a meeting or submission agreement or Student tracking form that can be used in conjunction with the supervision contract.

## **Understanding the aims and objectives of assessment**

### **What is your role as a supervisor?**

The IBO assessment criteria are very explicit on how they will assess an extended essay. In other words an excellent piece of research and argument will not always ensure a high mark.

Read the following extract from the *extended essay report - May 2003* in History.

*"Every session there are a considerable number of essays that are highly regarded by supervisors (on the evidence of predicted grades, comments on the cover sheet, enquiries-upon-results, etc.) but which sadly do not achieve the grade expected. From an examiner's perspective, many candidates lose marks for reasons that could so easily be avoided."*

For the purpose of this section of the workshop this quote suggests two things. The first is that supervisors are not sufficiently aware of the assessment criteria and process to advise the student when they are presenting an essay that will not be rewarded in this context. The second is that supervisors can also fail to provide simple advice on basic elements of the essay's final presentation.

In the end, an extended essay is the student's responsibility and this should never be forgotten by the supervisor. However, the supervisor can play a role in ensuring that the student has the best opportunity to gain an appropriate mark for their efforts and ability.

## **Identifying the easy marks**

*"A surprising number of essays would score 5, even 8 marks more with careful attention to such basic points"*

*Extended essay report (History) - May 2003*

### **Saving marks the easy way**

When asked, a principal examiner will frequently identify where the students lose easy marks. From their long experience of assessment, they have identified for this workshop where marks can be, (and are), lost:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Problem</b>	<b>Marks lost</b>
<b>A</b>	no research question (or thesis statement)	2
<b>E</b>	no conclusion	2
<b>F</b>	no abstract	2
	abstract exceeds 300 words	
	research question, scope or conclusion is missing	
<b>G</b>	essays exceeds 4,000 words	at least 3
	no contents page, page numbers	up to 3
<b>J</b>	no evaluation of sources	3

It is perhaps worthwhile building this table into the student's checklist.