

What is the purpose of feedback?

High quality reflection in combination with supportive and constructive feedback is essential for the professional development of all doctors in training.

Feedback enhances and facilitates reflection, learning and improvement.

Regular feedback provides an invaluable measure of current against previous performance, allowing progress to be made toward successful completion of a training programme.

In the case of Foundation doctors, feedback on SLEs is used as e-portfolio evidence of learning, whilst the formal written feedback at the end of each placement (from the PSG, TAB & CSR) guides the summative judgement against curriculum outcomes.

How should feedback be given?

Verbal Feedback should be given informally as a regular part of day to day experiential learning. This should take place as soon as possible after each clinical encounter, after allowing time to listen to the trainee's reflections.

Feedback should take place in a private supportive environment, and be delivered in a sensitive manner, giving trainees a sense of being valued and respected.

Written feedback is more formal and should be provided at the end of each placement (and more often if appropriate). This requires preparation time and takes into account information obtained from the PSG and TAB which contribute to the CSR. As with verbal feedback, it should be provided in a structured and supportive manner.

What are the characteristics of good feedback?

Good feedback is timely, accurate, honest, fair, specific and constructive. It should be directive, including an action plan for further development, taking into account both the expected level of performance of the trainee and any cultural differences between trainees.

In summary, effective feedback should:

- Facilitate and be guided by reflection
- Be directed towards agreed learning goals
- Be specific, relevant & descriptive
- Be non-judgemental & focussed on trainee behaviour
- Confirm the trainee's understanding of the content
- Include an action plan for future learning goals



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