

## **Giving Useful Feedback to Your Instructors and TAs**

### **A Guide for Students**

Your feedback matters. Just as your instructors and TAs provide feedback on your work to help you learn more effectively, mid-quarter feedback and end-of-quarter Student Experience of Teaching (SET) surveys are your chance to give your teachers useful feedback to help them teach more effectively.

The results of SET and other feedback surveys can allow you to reflect on your own progress in the course and communicate with the instructors what is supporting your learning and what is not supporting your learning. Think back over the term before you provide feedback, and carefully consider what you have learned, and what has helped you reach those learning goals.

The written comments can be especially useful to your instructors, as they can learn from those comments how to create the best learning environment for you and your peers.

#### **A few things to keep in mind when providing feedback:**

- Give feedback that describes specific behaviors or actions in the classroom, rather than your inferences.
- Give feedback that reflects on positive behaviors (what worked well?), and that suggests solutions or alternatives to any challenges that arose (what didn't work well, why, and how could it have gone differently?).
- Avoid emotionally charged language or comments about the identities (or perceived identities) of the instructor. These kinds of comments severely limit or even halt your communication of constructive feedback.

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Less helpful comments	More helpful comments
This instructor was awesome.	This instructor gave us lots of activities to do in the classroom, which helped me really understand the material rather than only memorizing stuff for a quiz.
This professor gave terrible lectures.	I had trouble understanding all the jargon in many of the lectures. It would have helped me if the professor spoke in more accessible language.
This professor doesn't care about students.	It would have been helpful if the professor had talked to the class like he was teaching people and not just the content. For example, it would have helped my learning if the professor had checked for understanding at certain points in the lecture.
The instructor just talked at us in the lecture.	It would have been more beneficial to my learning if we could have done more group work to discuss and test out new ideas with our peers.
This TA was motivating.	This TA told us stories about how she collected data for her research and helped us see the actual application of the content we were learning. The TA made me enthusiastic about doing research in the field.
The TA never went over the homework.	It would have helped my learning if the TA had incorporated a few of the homework problems into the section so that we could have worked on problem-solving and clarified any points where we didn't understand the problem.
The TA really cared about the students.	I appreciated the way this TA stayed after class to answer questions, responded to my emails in a timely manner, and held productive group office hours.