

Feedback to inform your reflective practice

5 ideas to think about

A key element of successful reflection is accessing a wide range of feedback and perspectives to inform your self-awareness and development. So where does this feedback come from? How can you gain further feedback in your everyday work and study?

1 What data and feedback do you already have?

It's easy to think that you need to start collecting data without thinking about what is already available. This might be typical feedback measures, such as grades and supporting feedback. Alternatively, it might be comments people have made, or outcomes such as establishing new contacts or being asked to get involved in future. Reflecting on this feedback will create a broader picture about what you brought to a situation – giving you the chance to test out your assumptions and self-beliefs.



2 Have a go-to feedback question

The advice from [Kim Scott, Radical Candour](#), is to have a go-to question to invite feedback from others that sounds natural from you. The question shouldn't be one where the answer can be 'yes' or 'no' and the one she uses is "What could I do or stop doing that would make it easier to work with me?" If you agree with the feedback, make a change as soon as possible. If the necessary change will take time, do something visible to show you're trying.



3 Ask for advice, not feedback

In a [recent study by Harvard Business School](#), one group were asked to give feedback on a job application and another group to give advice. Those who were asked to give feedback tended to give vague comments, where advice-givers suggested 34% more ways to improve the application and 56% more ways to improve in general. Advice-giving leads someone to think about future actions to take. So, to encourage someone to think critically and specifically about strategies that you could take to improve, try asking for advice rather than feedback.



4 Select the feedback/advice you will use

Not all feedback is useful. Who you want to be as a professional and how you would like to develop is a personal choice. Having clarity about where you want to focus for improvement will help you to select or ask for feedback that is the most helpful towards your aims. You can then select the data and feedback that will be helpful now - and put to one side what is not relevant for the next step that you want to take.



5 Treat this as an opportunity to test and experiment

Remember that feedback and advice is a perspective on what you have done, not you. It is a micro-insight into the way you operate or come across. Note patterns, try it on, see how it feels.

If it feels relevant and helpful, treat this as an opportunity to experiment with a slightly different approach to see whether this enables the impact that you are aiming for.

