This short guide aims to help you identify, understand and use feedback to support your learning while at college. Feedback is a key part of the learning process. A variety of formal and informal feedback opportunities are available to you in College, depending on your course or year of study.

RECOGNISING FEEDBACK
Feedback is not just about a mark and a comment at the end of an assignment. Feedback can take many forms: verbal, audio, written or even be computer generated. But start by looking to your lecturers for guidance. They will generally alert you when providing feedback to your group or class. Whether a grade on scoring grid, a discussion with your lecturer about a future assignment or a set of reference links for further study, note for future reference.

BEING PROACTIVE ABOUT FEEDBACK
Don’t just wait for feedback on a completed assignment. Be pro-active before you start work. Look for direction in the assessment wording. If you are asked for a 1,500 word summary of your research, that is what is expected. Marking schemes or the breakdown of marks within a question are also a useful indicator of the relative importance between sections. Marks are usually linked to criteria or standards. If you are not clear what these mean, ask for help.

PREPARING FOR FEEDBACK
Longer term projects often have a work in progress session or you might be asked to submit a draft piece of work. These give you a chance to ask for specific feedback on progress. Always confirm when feedback will be available on submitted work and the form that this feedback will take. This will save the disappointment of anticipating immediate feedback on a project brief, when a lecturer is intending to send extensive comments on the final project report.
UNDERSTANDING FEEDBACK
Assessments enable lecturers to see whether students are developing the skills and the knowledge required to succeed. So, consider feedback as part of a longer term process: not a once off occurrence. Feedback can often be linked to statements or grids to describe different types of learning. Match your feedback with assessment guidelines to see how you might do better next time. If you are still not clear or feel you would like additional support, don’t feel afraid to ask.

RECEIVING FEEDBACK
If you have control over when you receive feedback, access your marks at a time when you can take action eg obtain clarification or get support. If you think you might be about to receive bad news about a key assignment make sure a friend or classmate is around to talk it through afterwards. When you receive feedback, always try to review and analyse all the feedback, don’t just focus on the negative. Where have you done well? Where has there been improvement?

USING FEEDBACK
An effective way to make the most of your feedback is to create an action plan to monitor your progress. If you have a series of similar assignments, try and use your feedback to work on a skill. If there are lots of areas for development, be realistic and focus on one or two areas at a time eg academic writing or maths. If you get a chance to submit or present work in progress, use these opportunities wisely, try and ask to get feedback on key development areas.

OTHER SOURCES OF FEEDBACK
Don’t feel as though your lecturer is the only person that can provide you with useful feedback, exchanging an assignment with a classmate and each reading the others work is a useful exercise to see another person’s approach. A friend, unfamiliar with the topic, can also identify areas where clearer explanations might be required. Some programmes also involve potential employers within feedback processes to give an external and up-to-date perspective. Finally, whether good or bad, all feedback is potentially useful, if you take note and act on it!