An Academic Essentials Case Study

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Title | Formative Feedback for level 5 Employability Skills for Financial Services | |
| Brief | The use of formative feedback in developing an Employability Portfolio to support students in assessment and achieving their future goals. | |
| Profile | **Tutor names** | Zoe Newsham |
| **Email address** | z.newsham@shu.ac.uk |
| **College** | BTE |
| **Department** | FAMA |
| **Size of cohort** | Medium (15-30 students) |
| **Technologies used** | Blackboard |
| **Hallam Model** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| The Aim |
| Task one of the modules helps students develop a CV, Cover letter, skills audit and development plan and task 2 was a reflective piece of work. At this stage (level 5) these students have had no formal support on employability skills and task two was their first piece of reflective work at university. The learning situation this year has been unprecedented for the students so with this in mind we included formative feedback throughout the module, so students were able to produce each element of the task and upload it to blackboard for feedback prior to the official submission for marking |

|  |
| --- |
| Benefits |
| * Students have the opportunity to receive individual feedback on their work prior to submission allowing them a stronger chance of success with their work. * Students are more prepared for how they will be assessed. * Formative feedback allows students to improve the documents for submission to employers. |

|  |
| --- |
| The Approach |
| The module is usually covered face to face with students in London, because of the challenging Covid-19 circumstances we had to adapt what would be taught as workshops to be online lectures & seminars. The situation was further complicated by Wednesday being the only day the students were available for work with us as they had heavy commitments to other modules. The aim of the module is to provide students with the skills they need to succeed in gaining a placement or a graduate job.  For this there were two pieces of assessment, firstly a portfolio containing CV, cover letter, skills audit and a development plan for their future. The second part of the assessment was a reflective piece of work reflecting on their experiences throughout the module and around the completion of their development plan.  The first 4 workshops of the module cover the documents that should be submitted for task one. Following on from the workshop the students then had a week to work on the element covered and uploading to blackboard for feedback. Formative feedback was offered to students however participation was in no way mandatory, we encouraged the students take up the offer of feedback for their own development, approximately 30% of the students submitted work for formative feedback.  Following the submission of documents one on one meetings were then arranged with the students to discuss the work they had submitted and suggest areas they could improve on for the assessment and to support them in their future careers. |

|  |
| --- |
| The Outcome / Impact |
| Overall, 9 students achieved an overall First for the module, of these students 77% of them submitted work to tutors for formative feedback.  Looking at the first task alone 20 students submitted their work for marking without extensions and 16 of them achieved a 2:1 grade or higher.  From the 1:1 meeting I had with students who chose to submit their work for formative feedback I feel that the students gained from the experience and they were grateful for the opportunity of feedback to assist them in the module assessment and in gaining graduate employment.  I think the opportunity for formative feedback also gives us the chance to identify early students who may be struggling with the workload for any number of reasons and provide them with further support if required. |

|  |
| --- |
| Future Developments |
| Going forward I think developing formative feedback in this module would be useful. Even outside of covid times the structure of contact with the students is different to the usual modules therefore providing students with the opportunity to discuss their work prior to the assessment could prove valuable. Should the module run online again then formative feedback should definitely be used as a tool to support learning and development. |

|  |
| --- |
| Recommendations |
| * Encourage students to use formative feedback repeatedly, explain the benefits to the students and how it can improve their assessment mark. * Send out blackboard announcements reminding students to upload their work for feedback * Offer appointments to discuss or written feedback dependent on the student preference, not all students will want to discuss 1:1 and feel more comfortable with written feedback * Check that the students who are not taking up the offer of formative feedback are accessing the module in other ways and not being left behind. |

Want to share your case study with the wider academic community? Send to [Academic Development & Diversity](mailto:hrod-add-mb@exchange.shu.ac.uk) and we’ll host on our Academic Essentials: [Case Study](https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/teaching/case-studies/?doing_wp_cron=1621348107.9098811149597167968750) page for wider publication.