



Fact sheet

Using audio feedback for students

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Overview of audio feedback in assessment

Audio feedback for assessment is becoming more common as assessment tasks move online. Many students find that audio provides a more personal connection with teaching staff, and provides more nuanced feedback via tone of voice. Audio feedback of approximately one minute can contain a great deal of information and be quicker to create than the equivalent text comments in a document. Teaching staff may decide to combine a brief audio feedback along with more detailed textual feedback, this approach will appeal to students who prefer auditory or visual learning.

Pros of audio feedback

- Students have reported feeling a stronger sense of personal connection with teaching staff, particularly in a fully online class. Emotion, inflection and tone can be communicated thus offering a much richer level of feedback and clarity.
- Recording and placing audio files in the Assessment item in CloudDeakin is relatively easy to do and saves time for teaching staff where typing individual feedback can be time consuming.
- A great amount of in-depth feedback can be given in a short period of time, meaning students can receive feedback sooner, making it more relevant and helpful in their learning process.
- Audio can be used in all teaching environments: fully online, blended or face-to-face.
- Examples of common mistakes can be pre-recorded and applied to feedback for all students.

Cons of audio feedback

- Teaching staff may be reluctant to use audio feedback due to a lack of familiarity with technology and feeling uncomfortable recording their voice.
- Initially feedback in this format may take longer to prepare due to lack of familiarity by the user.
- Lengthy feedback makes it difficult for students to find particular points when reviewing material later.
- Accessibility issues must be addressed – transcripts will need to be provided for those with a hearing impairment and, at times, for those from CALD backgrounds.
- It is not a fix for poor or, limited feedback (e.g. 'good job'); this is just as much of an issue in audio format as it is in text.

Optimal lengths of time

Deakin currently offers one minute feedback files within CloudDeakin. The majority of feedback can be provided in this time if it is structured well. This internal audio feature allows feedback to take place directly in the CloudDeakin Assessment tool and is quick and easy to use. Small file size is an advantage of the internal Deakin audio recording tool, students with poor internet connections have difficulty downloading large files.

Some advocates of audio feedback use external programs that they then email to students using software or tools such as Sound Recorder or smart phones. This allows for more detailed feedback to be recorded. However, adding files to individual emails can make this a lengthy process. If longer feedback is needed external audio editing and recording tools can be accessed through the [Deakin Software Library](#).

Pros of external recording

- Teaching staff can cover more points in an in-depth manner.
- Teaching staff don't feel pressured to condense too much or plan too tightly as the longer recording time can provide greater flexibility.

Cons of external recording

- The benefit of reducing marking time is lost.
- External audio file size is usually larger than the one minute Deakin audio feedback. This can affect students who have limited, expensive, or slow, access to the internet.
- Students are less likely to listen all the way through longer recordings and it may be difficult to find salient points when reviewing.

Planning your audio feedback

- Choose whether to speak 'off the cuff' or to use a template or written plan.
 - Use the same template across the assessment (e.g. use a rubric and speak to the rubric).
 - Choose whether to use audio feedback for all assessments, or for a specific type.
- CloudDeakin allows you to use audio feedback for assignments and quizzes and formative feedback. However, something such as a long assignment may require more time than one minute of feedback. A multiple choice test, short answer and essay questions are usually suitable. Most feedback will fit into a one minute file.

Further details of planning feedback, and a sample script can be found in the '[Using audio and video for educational purposes](#)' fact sheet (p. 42).

Essential components of audio feedback

Deakin lecturers and sessional staff must provide formative feedback that is diagnostic, timely and meaningful. They must also provide summative judgments about performance (2013 *The Guide*, [Assessment policy, 1d](#)):

- A template should be developed using the assessment rubric as a checklist for assessment feedback to ensure that the above feedback criteria are met.
- The template should link the feedback with the unit outcomes and Deakin graduate learning outcomes.
- Check with your Faculty and School for any additional Faculty-specific feedback criteria.
- Provide advice to the student to help improve performance.
- Remember that the student will hear your voice but will not receive any physical cues. Be aware of the meaning you may convey.
- Test your recording equipment to make sure it is working and to familiarise yourself with the process. Be aware of ambient noise and try and arrange for a quiet room.

Resources

Articles and reports

Gould, J & Day, P 2012, 'Hearing you loud and clear: Student perspectives of audio feedback in higher education', *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 38, no. 5, pp. 554-66, retrieved 2 May 2014, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/02602938.2012.660131>.

Lunt, T & Curran, J 2010, 'Are you listening please?' The advantages of electronic audio feedback compared to written feedback', *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 35, no. 7, retrieved 2 May 2014, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02602930902977772#.UpbWTOL54dU>.

Martin, J 2012, 'From text to audio and back again: Providing students with good feedback', *Thoughts about Higher Education*, WordPress, retrieved 28 November 2013, <http://hethoughts.wordpress.com/2012/04/18/from-text-to-audio-and-back-again-providing-students-with-good-feedback/>.

McIntyre, S 2010, 'Case study: Using audio feedback', COFA, University of NSW, retrieved 2 May 2014, http://online.cofa.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/episode-pdf/CS_audio_feedback_LTTO.pdf.

Merry, S & Orsmond, P 2008, 'Students' attitudes to and usage of academic feedback provided via audio files', *Bioscience Education eJournal*, Vol. 11, June, retrieved 2 May 2014, <http://journals.heacademy.ac.uk/doi/abs/10.3108/beej.11.3>.

Rodway-Dyer, S, Knight, J & Dunne, E 2011, 'A case study on audio feedback with geography undergraduates', *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 217–31, retrieved 28 November 2013, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03098265.2010.524197#.U2M7NVfQleA>

Videos

Broadbent, J 2012, 'Using verbal feedback in D2L, Deakin University, retrieved 2 May 2014, http://air.deakin.edu.au/public/media/Using+Verbal+Feedback+in+D2L/O_rlanpitf.

McIntyre, S 2010, 'Using audio feedback – a case study', COFA, University of NSW, retrieved 28 November 2013, <http://online.cofa.unsw.edu.au/learning-to-teach-online/ltto-episodes?view=video&video=177>