

## **PGR Tips on making the most of feedback**

A doctorate is the highest academic degree awarded in this country and a degree implies that you are learning. This learning is very personal and the level you are aiming to attain is very high. Learning from feedback can be a key aspect. It is up to you to consider any feedback thoughtfully and do something positive with it. You may get more feedback than you have previously been used to: on chapters of your thesis by your supervisors, from peer reviewers on both submitted papers and grant applications, from editors on book chapters or from members of the audience when you are giving a presentation.

### **Seek feedback**

Feedback from peers and supervisors will improve what you are doing. For example, practising a presentation multiple times, and incorporating feedback each time, will make for a much better talk on the day. Similarly with drafts of chapters, grant proposals or papers.

### **Ask for focused feedback**

It may be easier to ask people to concentrate their feedback on particular aspects of your work. Ask people to comment separately on style, content, presentation, structure or focus.

### **Analyse the feedback**

To take feedback seriously, consider it carefully. Separate it out into different aspects. If you disagree with some of it, it may be best to discuss why. Is it balanced and constructive? If so, it's likely to be good advice. If not, take the advice with a pinch of salt. It may be useful to discuss feedback with your supervisor or peers.

### **Clarify if necessary**

If you are not sure what people mean, make sure you seek clarification. Feedback can be a good starting point for a wider conversation. People appreciate it when their feedback is taken seriously and will judge you positively on handling feedback well.

### **Incorporate it for next time**

Make sure you use people's feedback in any next draft. It is hard for people to see beyond things they have commented on or corrected before if they have not been changed, however much else has been improved. Also actively bear their suggestions in mind in future.

### **Recognise a devil's advocate**

Are people trying to encourage you to hone your arguments by deliberately choosing to disagree with you? Value this input and treat it as an opportunity.

### **Cultivate your mistakes**

Some feedback may alert you to actual mistakes. Recognise that making mistakes is a normal part of the learning process. Learn to learn from your mistakes. Perfection is seldom achieved instantly....

### **Don't take it personally**

It is important not to take any negative feedback personally. It is your work people are commenting on and in general they will do so to help you improve.