



## Feedback on drafts

Every draft needs revision to become a good text. In this phase, it is helpful to ask for feedback because you need to know how actual readers understand what you have written. It is up to you as a writer to make your text as easy and attractive to read as possible.

When revising your text, start with the big issues, the *higher order concerns*, before worrying about *later order concerns*. That means: First, you ask for feedback on content and structure and later on style and language. Finally, you edit your text in terms of grammar, spelling and punctuation as well as formal requirements (layout, citation style, references and other appendices, cover sheet...).

If you are writing in an additional language, you should also proceed like this and initially focus on the *higher order concerns*. Non-native writers often focus on language – but above all, a good text needs a clear message.

Be specific when you ask for feedback. It is also a good idea to ask two or three different people because different readers notice different things. Depending on their background, they can give you feedback on different questions. It is entirely up to you who you ask for feedback, both from within and outside of the university.

The comparison between what your readers note and what you wanted to say will help you improve your text. **But remember:** It is your text, and only you are responsible for it. Thank your readers for their feedback and decide later which comments you want to act on.

You can ask your readers the following questions:

### 1. Overall impression:

- What do you like about the text? What is good, what is interesting?
- Where do I name the topic and research question? Could you mark them for me?
- What is the main message of my text? Could you sum it up in one sentence?
- Which questions do you still have after reading my text?
- Where do I give too much detail or repeat myself?
- Is there a part you had to read several times to understand it?

### 2. Content:

- What are the messages of the different parts of the text? Could you write them next to the individual section?
- Which parts of the text were the most difficult to understand? Why?
- Where do you see a connection between the introduction and the conclusion?
- Which position do I take with my text? Where did you need to think about what my position is? Are there parts in which I contradict myself?



### **3. Structure:**

- Do I answer a clear research question? Which one?
- What do you like about the structure of my text, and where could I present my content in a different order?
- Which parts of my text do you find long, which ones do you find short?
- Which other parts would you have expected?
- Can you identify one central thought per paragraph? Could you write this thought next to each paragraph?

### **4. Academic standards:**

- Which signposts do I use to guide my readers through the text? Where could I include additional ones?
- At which points did you have to double check to make sure you know whose thoughts I am referring to?
- Can you identify my own position towards the theories, models and research results I present? What is my position?
- Do you think my use of "I" and "we" is appropriate in the text? What would you say differently?
- Where do you notice me using discipline specific terminology? Do you know these terms? Are there alternatives?

### **5. Language and style:**

- Which sentences do you find particularly concise and convincing? Which ones do I still need to work on?
- Where do I take an objective position (no emotional expressions), where do I not? Where do I make claims that are too universal?
- Which expressions should I reconsider (e.g. because they are too casual or exaggerating)?
- Which sentences could I write more clearly and easier to understand (for example with less complex constructions)? Do you notice grammatical mistakes?