Teacher’s Toolbox
Guidelines for giving and receiving feedback

Giving feedback – do’s

- Establish the student’s agenda
- Get the student to start with what went well – the positive
- Teacher starts positive – however difficult it may seem
- Comment on specific aspects of the consultation – i.e. in history taking
- Active listening (eye contact, stance etc.)
- Use of silence
- Clarifying
- Responding to cues (verbal, non-verbal, psychosocial)
- Summarising
- Empathising etc.
- Move to areas “to be improved” (avoid the term “negative”!) – follow the student’s agenda first
- If in a group, ask other students to comment – but remind them “No criticism without recommendation”
- Teacher offers own observations & constructive criticisms
- Be specific
- Always offer alternatives
- Begin with “…..I wonder if you had tried”
- “….perhaps you could have…..”
- “….sometimes I find…..helpful…..”
- Distinguish between the intention and the effect of a comment or behaviour
- Distinguish between the person and the performance (“what you said sounded judgmental” – rather than “You are judgmental”)
- Do discuss clinical decision making
- Do be prepared to discuss ethical and attitudinal issues if they arise

Giving feedback – don’ts

- Don’t forget the student’s emotional response
- Don’t criticise without recommending
- Don’t comment on personal attributes (that can’t be changed)
- Don’t generalise
- Don’t be dishonestly kind – if there was room for improvement be specific and explore alternative approaches
Don’t forget that your feedback says as much about YOU as about the person it is directed to!

Guidelines for receiving constructive feedback

- Listen to it (rather than prepare your response/defence)
- Ask for it to be repeated if you did not hear it clearly
- Assume it is constructive until proven otherwise; then consider and use those elements that are constructive
- Pause and think before responding
- Ask for clarification and examples if statements are unclear or unsupported
- Accept it positively (for consideration) rather than dismissively (for self-protection)
- Ask for suggestions of ways you might modify or change your behaviour
- Respect and thank the person giving feedback