

My tutor was great – he found me a research project and encouraged me to do it. I really appreciated that.

I was very happy with a 2.1 (in my first set of collections). I was really reassured to know that I was 'on track'.

I've been really lucky in my college to have a tutor who has made real efforts to develop a sense of community amongst the students.

It can be a problem that tutors don't explain **why** they're doing what they're doing. It would be better if they went through the motivation first – then went into the detail.

Constructive feedback can really help: "you may make mistakes but you can do this".

It would be helpful to have the opportunity for a chat with your tutor about what motivates you (not just what you are good and bad at).

Student focus group sessions were held in Hilary Term 2016 (for full report see MTC papers 4_5_2016 pages 7-26, <https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/node/13869/25653>). *The quotations on the side of this page are all from female undergraduate students who took part. Some of the feedback on teaching and learning is illuminating:*

Some students had felt scared to ask questions, particularly early in the course. For example one participant felt that she could not engage because she could not understand in the first place, and that everything was "so rushed" that there was "no time to ask questions". Thus it is important to foster an atmosphere where students feel able to ask questions and in particular that tutors make specific efforts to ensure that each student is able to speak up and ask questions. It is of course also important that the tutor responds positively to questions and comments.

There was general agreement that *really constructive feedback helps*. That is feedback which emphasises areas in which students are strong, and advises on action to take in areas where students are weaker.

Students may also need precise advice about approaching examinations. There is a set of Divisional recommendations in this area: see 'Preparing students for exams, model answers, peer marking' at <http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/study/additionalinformation/examinations-for-taught-courses>

Suitability of tutorial partners was felt to make a difference (though not necessarily that women should be paired with other women). Students valued tutorial partners who were "well-matched": either at the same level or with whom they otherwise felt able to discuss the work, and it was felt that *specific efforts to foster cohesion between students in college or to integrate the students within a class may be helpful*.

It was emphasised that *learning may be facilitated by teaching being better contextualised* – for example tutors/lecturers should be sure to outline what they were doing, and why, in advance.

Finally: One female student reported that she had, via email, asked what a tutor considered to be a "really good" question, but when discussing it in a tutorial the tutor appeared to have forgotten who the questioner was and assumed the question had been asked by a man. It may be that the tutor was using male pronouns to include female, in which case this illustrates how important it is not to do this. Otherwise it may be an example of 'unconscious bias', see above.