Interpreting Feedback and Grades: Chinese MSc Students' Emotional Experiences in UK Higher

Questionnaire

Q1. Which of the following is the reason you chose to study abroad?(Multiple responses allowed)

    ☐ Research/Academic Environment

    ☐ Competitiveness in employment

    ☐ To broaden my horizons and experience different cultures and lifestyles

    ☐ Family/parents' suggestions or requirements

    ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q2. What were your reasons for choosing to come to the UK to do a Masters degree in the first place?(Multiple responses allowed)]

    ☐ The research/academic environment of UK universities appealed to me

    ☐ There are better schools ranked

    ☐ There are more preferred professions

    ☐ A one-year master's degree can lead to a faster diploma

    ☐ Other

Q3. What did you consider to be a "good grade" before coming to the UK?

    ☐ 90 and above

    ☐ 80–89

    ☐ 70–79

    ☐ 60–69

    ☐ Below 60 is also acceptable

Q4. What was your previous academic (undergraduate) score usually before coming to the UK?

    ☐ 90 and above

☐ 80–89

☐ 70–79

☐ 60–69

☐ Below 60

Q5. What are your current typical grades at Masters level since coming to the UK?

☐ 90 and above

☐ 80–89

☐ 70–79

☐ 60–69

☐ 50–59

☐ 40–49

☐ Below 40

Q6. After arriving in the UK from China, did you experience any emotional shock when you were first exposed to the UK grading results?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q6-a. What were your primary emotional reactions at that time? (Multiple choice)

☐ Shocked or in disbelief

☐ Disappointed or frustrated

☐ Angry or felt it was unfair

☐ Anxious or self-doubting

☐ Wanted to give up or reassess goals

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q6-b. What do you think are the main causes of those emotional reactions? (Multiple choice)

☐ The grade was far below my expectations

☐ Unclear grading criteria; unsure where I went wrong

☐ The teacher's feedback confused or discouraged me

☐ I put in a lot of effort but did not receive recognition

☐ Felt that the teacher didn't understand my expression or logic

☐ Not used to the emphasis on "critical thinking"

☐ Fast course pace and heavy workload caused stress

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q6-c. If you did not experience emotional fluctuations, what were the reasons? (Multiple choice)

☐ I had already expected grades would be lower than in China

☐ I understood the UK grading standards and structure

☐ I don't care much about grades and focus more on the learning process

☐ UK grades are acceptable to me

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q7. How do you usually manage emotional fluctuations and academic stress? (Multiple choice)

☐ Talk to friends or classmates

☐ Seek emotional support from family

☐ Seek help from tutors or the university (e.g., office hour, student support)

☐ Internalize or self-process

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q7-a. Why didn't you express your confusion or emotions to your tutor or school? (Multiple choice)

☐ Didn't know whom to approach / unclear communication channels

☐ Worried about being misunderstood or facing negative consequences

☐ Felt that the teacher wouldn't truly understand my situation

☐ Felt that expressing emotion seemed "weak" and was uncomfortable doing so

☐ Insufficient English ability to express inner feelings clearly

☐ The tutor was too busy / felt distant, didn't want to disturb

☐ Used to handling things independently, didn't want external help

☐ Expressed before but it didn't help

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q8. Before coming to the UK for postgraduate study, did you value grades? (Single choice)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q8-a. What were your main reasons for valuing (or not valuing) grades at that time? (Multiple choice)

☐ Grades determine eligibility for scholarships or postgraduate programs

☐ High expectations from parents or teachers

☐ Good grades increase self-confidence and identity

☐ Grades directly affect job or overseas application

☐ High competition means grades are the only evaluation standard

☐ I cared more about the learning process or interest, not grades

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q9. After studying in the UK, do you still value grades now? (Single choice)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q9-a. What are your current reasons for valuing (or not valuing) grades? (Multiple choice)

☐ Grades affect whether I receive Distinction

☐ Grades affect whether I can graduate smoothly

☐ Worried about future job or return-to-home development

☐ I now focus more on actual learning and ability

☐ Adjusted expectations as UK grades are generally lower

☐ Feedback and comments matter more than numeric grades

☐ My tutor encourages focusing on thinking patterns over grades

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q10. When it comes to grades, which aspects do you care about most? (Multiple choice)

☐ Absolute score (e.g., 60 vs. 75)

☐ Class distribution / relative ranking

☐ Whether the grade reflects my real performance

☐ Impact on future applications / employment

Q11. Would you change your course choices based on the grading method or grade difficulty? (Single choice)

☐ Yes, I often consider grades when choosing courses

☐ No

Q11-a. If yes, what are the main influencing factors? (Multiple choice)

☐ Prefer courses where it's easier to get high grades

☐ Avoid teachers or courses known for strict grading

☐ Consider whether the course has clear grading standards and feedback

☐ Peer feedback said this course is hard to score well in

☐ Concerned about affecting GPA / graduation classification

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q11-b. If no, what are the reasons? (Multiple choice)

☐ I care more about course content's interest or practicality

☐ I believe I can handle any course

☐ I think course selection should challenge me, not avoid difficulty

☐ Credit distribution limits my choice flexibility

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q11-c. During your study at the University of Edinburgh, have you heard of or encountered any courses that are generally graded very high or low? (Single choice)

☐ Yes, I've heard of or know some "easy A" or "low grade" courses

☐ No, I haven't heard of such information

Q12. Have you received written or oral feedback after submitting assignments/projects?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q12-a. Do you find the written feedback you received helpful?

☐ Very helpful (specific and instructive)

☐ Somewhat helpful (but a bit vague)

☐ Not very helpful (generic or templated)

☐ Not helpful at all

Q12-b. Which aspects of feedback are most valuable to you? (Multiple choice)

☐ Suggestions for specific project components

☐ Clear explanation of strengths and areas for improvement

☐ Clarifying where and why points were deducted and how to fix them

☐ Providing excellent examples or reference works

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q12-c. What type of feedback format do you prefer?

☐ Rubric-based scoring with comments on each aspect

☐ Overall evaluation with summary suggestions

☐ Mainly grades, no need for written comments

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q13. Have you ever encountered a situation where the communication or written feedback was encouraging, but the final grade was unexpectedly low or strict? (Single choice)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q13-a. How do you interpret this inconsistency? (Multiple choice)

☐ Teachers want to encourage students without hurting confidence

☐ Teachers tend to give criticism in softer, indirect language

☐ UK grades are generally lower and do not necessarily reflect disapproval

☐ Feedback is too vague to identify actionable improvements

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q13-b. How did you feel about this inconsistency? (Multiple choice)

☐ Confused; didn't know what went wrong

☐ Felt the feedback was insincere or misleading

☐ Didn't know how to improve based on the comments

☐ Saw it as a cultural communication difference

☐ Accepted it, but still felt disappointed

☐ No special feelings; I understand the style

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q14. Have you experienced any of the following situations? (Multiple choice)

☐ Discussed your plan with the teacher beforehand but was still marked as "off-topic"

☐ The actual grading did not match the stated criteria

Q14-a. How do you interpret such inconsistencies? (Multiple choice)

☐ The teacher did not follow a consistent grading standard

☐ Grading criteria were too vague or unclear

☐ Feedback was too general to allow targeted improvement

☐ Misinterpreted the teacher's comments due to cultural or linguistic misunderstanding (e.g., terms like "interesting")

Q15. Which mechanisms do you think would help improve the grading experience? (Multiple choice)

☐ Detailed explanation of grading criteria and grade ranges at the beginning of the course

☐ Stage-by-stage feedback throughout the course

☐ Feedback split into "strengths" and "areas to improve"

☐ Provide class distribution / average scores as reference

☐ Opportunity to resubmit or revise

☐ Consistency in teacher grading standards throughout the course

☐ Clear specification of bonus/deduction criteria in grading forms

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q16. What additional support would you like the university to provide regarding feedback? (Multiple choice)

☐ Workshops explaining grading with typical examples

☐ Formal channels for appealing feedback or grades

☐ Buffer period or low-stakes tasks at the beginning to familiarize with system

☐ Stronger teacher engagement with project process

☐ Teachers giving more practical and executable guidance

☐ Other suggestions: _____