# **3 ways to use tutorial prompts**

This resource gives ideas for three types of prompts that tutors can use in tutorial discussions to support students’ learning and understanding. These prompts are in the form of open-ended questions which give students the opportunity to talk through, question and reflect on their understanding of the tutorial work as well as the way they approached it.

## 1. Prompts to gauge learning

As well as prompting students to consider what worked well and not so well in their approach to the tutorial work – and so what they might do differently next time – it can help identify any areas that need to be clarified or discussed further in the tutorial.

Examples of questions to gauge students’ learning are as follows:

* ‘What questions do you have about the tutorial work that was set?’
* ‘What steps did you take to approach the tutorial work?’
* ‘Which concepts / evidence / theories proved most challenging?’
* 'Which of the resources / readings did you find most/least helpful and why?’

## 2. Prompts to connect students’ learning

Prompts can be used to help students to make connections between the tutorial work they’ve just completed and other aspects of learning on their degree programme. This can help students to understand how different parts of the curriculum fit together, rather than perceiving each tutorial as a separate and disconnected area of learning.

Questions to support students in making these learning connections could include:

* ‘How does this tutorial topic link to areas you’ve covered in lectures/practical classes/seminars etc.?’
* ‘What does this tell us more broadly about this topic / methodology / type of problem?’
* ‘What do you think are the outstanding questions/unknowns in this topic? How might you go about trying to answer them?’

## 3. Prompts to consolidate learning

As the tutorial draws to a close, prompts can be used to consolidate students’ learning by finding out what they have understood and what questions still remain. These types of questions will help students to reflect on, and take note of, areas where they’ve made progress and what they may need to work on in future. Asking these questions will also help you to identify any aspects that should be followed up, either in the next tutorial (if there is one), in any supplementary material that you might provide afterwards and/or by directing students to relevant resources, such as lectures or literature. These types of prompt questions also work well as a written and / or anonymous exercise at the end of the tutorials (also known as a ‘minute paper’).

Examples of prompt questions to consolidate learning could include:

* ‘What were your initial questions about the topic and have they been addressed? If so, can you explain how?’
* ‘How has this tutorial changed the way you understand the topic / paper?’
* ‘What further questions do you have about the topic that weren’t explored today?’
* ‘What aspects of the tutorial topic remain unclear?’