Marking and Moderation Policy

Contents

1. Definitions

- **Marking**: The process of initial grading and providing constructive feedback/feedforward to students on submitted summative assessments.

- **Second Marking/Double Marking**: The process where a student's work is independently assessed by a second person to ensure fairness, accuracy, and consistency in grading.

- **Standardisation**: The process that ensures consistency and fairness in marking and assessment where there is multiple first markers (ie where there are large cohorts of students and first marking is shared amongst a team).

- **Internal Moderation**: The process that ensures consistent and fair marking of assessments by internal staff checking work against the criteria / rubric. It involves verifying that marking standards are applied consistently across a module, which helps maintain the integrity and reliability of the assessment process.

- **External Moderation / Examining:** An independent review of the assessment process to ensure that student work is marked consistently and fairly against national standards.

2. Marking Processes

2.1 Marking involves judging submitted assignments against the module learning outcomes and the assessment criteria / rubric in the assignment brief, shared with students at the start of the module delivery.

2.2 It should include the provision of feedback/forward in accordance with University guidance and be completed within three working weeks following the advertised submission date for students.

2.3 Where large numbers of students undertake the same assessment, the division of marking responsibilities across the teaching team is at the discretion of the Course Leader / Head of Subject. Second marking should be carried out by designated members of the module team and qualified colleagues, as determined by the Course Leader/ Head of Subject. Where marking is shared across a team, it is recommended that the team undertake a standardisation exercise, as explained below.

3. Second Marking / Double Marking Processes and Standardisation

3.1 Second Marking / Double Marking Processes

3.1.1 Second marking is the assessment of students' work by two (or more) markers to assure academic standards by checking for independent bias. Second marking can take three forms:

- **Seen / open marking**: when the second marker marks the assignment with access to the marks and feedback provided by the first marker. Where seen (or open) second marking takes place, it involves a second member of academic staff using their professional judgement to confirm the validity and equity of the marks for the cohort, taking into account the marks and comments of the first marker; and that marking schemes have been properly applied. The second marker reviews the marking and may comment on how the work does (or does not) meet the learning outcomes. The second marker should not comment (directly on the student script or other feedback platform, eg Turnitin) on the quality of the first marker's individual feedback / feedforward.

- **Independent marking**: when the second marker marks the assignment exactly as it was submitted, with no access to the marking and/or feedback comments provided by the first marker. This form of second marking is most often used for dissertation / project modules, where second independent marking is required by a PSRB or following guidance provided at course approval (including course approvals with collaborative partners).

- **Team / Group marking**: when two or more markers work together in making judgements about and providing feedback on submitted work. Markers should come to independent judgements before discussion wherever possible. This form of marking is appropriate for live performances and presentations.

3.1.2 Where differences in marks arise in cases where the assessments have been second / double marked they should be resolved through a discussion between the markers on the application of the assessment criteria. Where there is less than a 5% gap between the marks, then the first mark will stand.

3.1.3 Borderline marks are not subject to routine special consideration at the level of individual assessment or module. Where a marker is uncertain of which side of grade boundary an assessment should be graded, it is recommended that the marker meet with the Course Leader for a professional discussion to agree the appropriate grade taking into account the QAA guidance on grade boundaries and the script is included in the moderation process. Further guidance on grade boundaries is published by the QAA and can be found here at Annex D. At award level the university processes for raising the degree, diploma or certificate classification, as detailed in the Academic Regulations, apply.

3.1.4 Should the above measures fail to resolve differences (between the two marks which cannot be resolved), a third marker should be employed.

3.1.5   The University recognises the need for Schools and Assessment Boards to conduct the assessment of students in a manner that is appropriate to individual disciplines and to the methods of assessment employed, although Schools are expected to adopt the processes outlined in regard to marking and internal moderation. Where courses are subject to Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) regulations, these procedures may be adapted to meet their specific requirements.

3.1.6   Generally, it is expected that:

- All assessments will be subject to second / double marking in whichever form of second marking (as detailed in section 3.1) is appropriate for the subject and/or assessment. It is accepted that second marking will be carried out by course / module teams, as explained in section 3.1 and that where seen / open marking is used, this may be done as a sample of the total number of submissions in line with section 4.3.1.

- Second marking may be accepted as a form of internal moderation (see guidance on internal moderation below at section 4)

- Student work, marks and feedback should be returned to students after second marking / internal moderation has taken place, though feedback could be returned sooner. This will normally be before the student work has been externally moderated and ratified by an Assessment Board, and therefore students should be advised that marks are conditional until confirmed by the Board.

- As noted above, live performances and presentations are normally attended and assessed by two members of staff, one of whom is a subject specialist. The mark is agreed by both assessors and feedback is provided using set assessment criteria. If only one member of staff is available, the assessment will normally be recorded and moderated by another member of staff after the event.

- Where a module is delivered by a collaborative partner, if usual moderation processes do not lead to a satisfactory outcome, the script should be referred to the ALT or a campus-based moderator.

3.2 Standardisation:

3.2.1   Where an assessment is being first marked by a team of multiple markers, for consistency, the marking team may find it useful to undertake a process of

standardisation. This is likely to occur where a module has a high number of students enrolled on it and the marking is divided amongst several staff members. The purpose of a standardisation exercise is to establish that all markers are applying the agreed grade criteria consistently. In practice, this involves the relevant group of markers (e.g. a module marking team) each independently marking a small sample of pieces of student work (eg three scrips each) and assigning grades using pre-agreed criteria/the rubric. The marking team then arrange to meet to review the sample marking, compare and discuss the outcomes to standardise their approaches. Following this exercise, the assessors continue to mark student work in the usual manner. Marking standardisation exercises such as this should be used where appropriate and in addition to moderation/second marking.

4. Internal Moderation Process

4.1 The aims of internal moderation

In line with the QAA Quality Code guidance the aims of internal moderation are:

- to provide a check that an assessment has been marked in line with the expressed aims and learning outcomes of the assignment/examination, and in terms of marking criteria;

- to provide assurance for students of fairness of marking and hence the equality of treatment of each student;

- to assure internal consistency of assessment within a module;

- to provide an approach to the comparability of standards across modules within a subject area.

4.2 Ensuring Fairness and Consistency

4.2.1   As students are not permitted to appeal against academic judgement, it is important to ensure fairness and consistency and ensure that assessment criteria has been applied consistently through the internal moderation process.

4.2.2   Internal moderation will focus on the full set of marks awarded for the assessment within the context of academic standards for the module.

4.2.3   Internal moderation is not concerned with making changes to individual student marks or on resolving differences between two or more markers.

4.3 Internal moderation by sampling of the cohort:

4.3.1   The sample should include sufficient examples from each of the classification bands if the size of cohort permits, that is, three fails, three 40-49s (for undergraduate), three 50-59s, three 60-69s and three in the 70s and above, or 10% of the cohort size from across the classification bands, whichever is the greater number of samples.

4.3.2   Where a large cohort is marked by a large team, it may be necessary to moderate a greater sample in order to ensure consistency of marking across the team.

4.3.3   It is not necessary to include in the sample all fails and all firsts unless this is specifically requested by an external examiner.

4.4 Internal moderation of the whole cohort:

4.4.1   It may be appropriate for all work in a cohort to be internally moderated if the numbers on the module are low and sampling would not provide a sufficiently representative group of work.

4.5 Internal Moderation of Reassessments / Resits:

4.5.1   Since internal moderation of student work will have been done for the first submission, further internal moderation for reassessments is not required in the same way as for first submissions. For reassessments/resits, all fails will be subject to internal moderation.

4.6 Organisation of Internal Moderation

4.6.1   The first marker will normally be the person who set the assessment or the module leader. The second marker / internal moderator will normally be a member of the module / course team.

4.6.2   A clear record of which individual pieces of assessment have been moderated must be kept to ensure that the process can be audited.

4.6.3   The relevant Internal Moderation form (in Annex A) must be completed and included in the external moderation sample provided to the External Examiner as evidence that internal moderation has taken place. The form will be pre-

populated as much as is possible and shared with course teams by Academic Registry.

5. External Moderation/Examining Process

5.1 Overview

Following a robust process of Internal Moderation, a sample of assessment items will be reviewed by the External Examiner.

5.2 Role

The role of the External Examiner is to provide an objective, external engagement with the assessment items to ensure that they have been graded reliably and reflect the required academic standards set by the University in line with sector expectations.

5.3 Materials to be made available to the External Examiner(s):

Course and Module teams are responsible for uploading the component samples of a module to a secure SharePoint folder and providing the associated External Examiner(s) access to the following documents to enable external examining to be carried out:

5.3.1   An 'External Examiner Digital Pack' for every module that contains:

- A folder containing the relevant assignment brief and mark scheme / rubric
- A folder with evidence of internal modification and the assessment samples (exam scripts should be scanned and uploaded to the 'Digital Pack')
- A course and module specification
- A module performance summary

5.3.2   Collaborative Partners are required to liaise with the respective Academic Liaison Tutors (ALTs) to mirror this process and ensure that a relevant 'External Examiner Digital Pack' is available for partnership modules.

5.4 The Assessment Samples:

5.4.1   The assessment sample will normally be a maximum of 20 items of assessed work for each assessment component within a module (or, if the cohort size is 20 or less, the total number of items of assessed work submitted). This will be spread across the range of assessment tasks and all classification bands and failing grades, as stated in section 4.3.1 For postgraduate dissertations, the normal sample size will be 10 items of assessed work.

5.4.2   Samples should be made available from all modules, usually this would be at levels 5 to 7, but it may also include levels 3 and 4 where this is a requirement of a PSRB or other external body, eg Pearson

    a. Attention should focus on those items that have been awarded:
- A fail

- A borderline pass/fail

- A mark at an interface between classification bands

- Extremes of grades within the classification band (eg work graded at 90%)

    b. The sample will contain items that were chosen for internal moderation and those that were not.

    c. A copy of the Internal Moderation Form should be available to all External Examiners and included in the External Examiner pack.

    d. External Examiners can view other pieces of students' assessed work, beyond that which is included in the sample, if they wish; for example, an External Examiner may request to see more student work if they do not feel the sample they have received provides them with enough information to form a judgement on academic standards.

    e. External Examiners will not be asked to adjudicate in cases of disagreement between internal assessors.

5.5 With respect to the retention of student assessed work, Schools must ensure that:

(a)   The assessment samples made available to External Examiners are retained in SharePoint. This is to ensure that Progression and Award Boards can reach secure and defensible judgements about awards and progression of students. The retained assessment samples will also be made available to the OfS on request and as such will be archived for a period of five years plus in-year.

(b) Beyond the requirements stated above, Schools should retain assessed work according to their own identified needs e.g. to meet professional body requirements;

(c) All assessed work that is retained should be kept and organised, to enable effective management. At the end of the retention period, all retained work should be disposed of as confidential waste.

Annex A: Sample Internal Moderation Forms

Internal moderation of assessment (UG)

Section A: To be completed by the module leader and given/sent to the internal moderator.	
Module code:	
Module title:	
Cohort / Group (where appropriate):	
Type of assessment:	
Assessment title:	
Weighting:	
Submission date:	
Internal moderation date:	
Number of students registered on the module:	
Total number of submissions:	
Number of non-submissions:	
Total number of fails:	
% of students who passed the assessment:	
Subject Standards Board:	
SSB Date:	
Name of External Examiner(s):	
Name of Markers:	
Module Leader's signature and date:	

Section B: To be completed by the internal moderator before the work is returned to students.

Name of Moderator:

Grade	Total number of assessed pieces of work per grade classification before moderation	Actual number of assessed pieces of work moderated per grade classification	Number of grade classification amendments resulting in grades increasing post-modification	Number of grade classification amendments resulting in grades decreasing post-modification
70 - 100%				
60 - 69%				
50 - 59%				
40 - 49%				
30 - 39%				
1 - 29%				

I confirm that the moderation process has sampled a range of grades from all the markers, and on the basis of the sample considered, the marking of this work:

a. is consistent across grade bands and markers:	☐ Yes ☐ No
b. accords with the assessment criteria:	☐ Yes ☐ No
Were any marks amended?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, was all the work graded by the marker in question re-visited?	☐ Yes ☐ No
How were the marking issues resolved?	

Comments on the quality and consistency of written feedback to the students:

Any further comments for quality enhancement:	
Moderator's signature and date:	

A copy of this form, together with a copy of the assessment task and marking criteria / rubrics, must be sent to the Module and Course Leaders and External Examiner(s).

Internal moderation of assessment (PG)

Section A: To be completed by the module leader and given/sent to the internal moderator.	
Module code:	
Module title:	
Cohort / Group (where appropriate):	
Type of assessment:	
Assessment title:	
Weighting:	
Submission date:	
Internal moderation date:	
Number of students registered on the module:	
Total number of submissions:	
Number of non-submissions:	
Total number of fails:	
% of students who passed the assessment:	
Subject Standards Board:	
SSB Date:	
Name of External Examiner(s):	
Name of Markers:	
Module Leader's signature and date:	

Section B: To be completed by the internal moderator before the work is returned to students.	
Name of Moderator:	

Grade	Total number of assessed pieces of work per grade classification before moderation	Actual number of assessed pieces of work moderated per grade classification	Number of grade classification amendments resulting in grades increasing post-modification	Number of grade classification amendments resulting in grades decreasing post-modification
70 - 100%				
60 - 69%				
50 - 59%				
40 - 49%				
1 - 39%				

I confirm that the moderation process has sampled a range of grades from all the markers, and on the basis of the sample considered, the marking of this work:	
a. is consistent across grade bands and markers:	☐ Yes ☐ No
b. accords with the assessment criteria:	☐ Yes ☐ No
Were any marks amended?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, was all the work graded by the marker in question re-visited?	☐ Yes ☐ No
How were the marking issues resolved?	
Comments on the quality and consistency of written feedback to the students:	
Any further comments for quality enhancement:	

Moderator's signature and date:	

A copy of this form, together with a copy of the assessment task and marking criteria / rubrics, must be sent to the Module and Course Leaders and External Examiner(s).

Internal moderation of assessment (Pass/Fail)

Section A: To be completed by the module leader and given/sent to the internal moderator.	
Module code:	
Module title:	
Cohort / Group (where appropriate):	
Type of assessment:	
Assessment title:	
Weighting:	
Submission date:	
Internal moderation date:	
Number of students registered on the module:	
Total number of submissions:	
Number of non-submissions:	
Total number of fails:	
% of students who passed the assessment:	
Subject Standards Board:	
SSB Date:	
Name of External Examiner(s):	
Name of Markers:	
Module Leader's signature and date:	

Section B: To be completed by the internal moderator before the work is returned to students.	
Name of Moderator:	

Grade	Total number of assessed pieces of work per grade classification before moderation	Actual number of assessed pieces of work moderated per grade classification	Number of grade classification amendments resulting in grades increasing post-modification	Number of grade classification amendments resulting in grades decreasing post-modification
Pass				
Fail				

I confirm that the moderation process has sampled a range of grades from all the markers, and on the basis of the sample considered, the marking of this work:

a. is consistent across grade bands and markers:	☐ Yes ☐ No
b. accords with the assessment criteria:	☐ Yes ☐ No
Were any marks amended?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, was all the work graded by the marker in question re-visited?	☐ Yes ☐ No
How were the marking issues resolved?	

Comments on the quality and consistency of written feedback to the students:

Any further comments for quality enhancement:

Moderator's signature and date:	

A copy of this form, together with a copy of the assessment task and marking criteria / rubrics, must be sent to the Module and Course Leaders and External Examiner(s).