

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

GUIDANCE REGARDING THE APPLICATION OF MARKING PRACTICES FOR SUMMATIVE WORK

Under the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, higher education providers are expected to operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment (UK Quality Code, Chapter B6) and that the processes for marking assessments and for moderating marks are clearly articulated and consistently operated (Indicator 13). In this context, the QAA gives the following definitions:

Internal moderation is a process separate from that of marking and provides assurance that assessment criteria have been applied appropriately, reflecting the shared understanding of the markers, and an approach which enables comparability across academic subjects (in particular recognising that students may be studying more than one subject).

Moderation focuses on the marks awarded to the full set of assessed work for a task, module or programme, in the context of the academic standards for the award. It is therefore separate from the question of how differences in marks between two or more markers are resolved, and is not about making changes to an individual student's marks.

1. As set out in the Senate Regulations (7.10, below), the University recognises a range of marking practices that may be adopted, depending on the nature of the assessment and whether or not it contributes towards a student's final degree outcome.
2. All summative work that contributes marks towards a student's final degree outcome must be subject to a process of moderation or double marking.
3. It is important that all markers engaged in marking a given assessment are provided with an agreed marking scheme.
4. Double marking is intensive and may impact on the ability to return the work within the required time period (normally 21 days for campus-based and 28 days for DL programmes). As such, it should be employed where individual scrutiny of every piece of work is required of both markers, examples of such work include:
 - a) Dissertations/large scale project reports which are individual items of work and typically carry a high credit weighting.
 - b) Oral presentations or other ephemeral activities where there is no physical or electronic record of the student's submission.
5. Moderation (7.10(d)) may be used as the normal form of assurance of the marking standards of examination scripts and summatively assessed coursework, other than the above.
 - a) The moderator should be provided with the full set of marks, as determined by the first marker. A minimum of 10% of the set of assignments should be moderated (subject to a minimum sample size of 10 assignments, or all of the assignments where there are fewer than 10 students in the cohort).
 - b) The set of assignments to be moderated should include the full spread of the marking range with samples taken from the top, middle and bottom of the range.

- c) Where the set of assignments has been divided among two or more first markers, the moderator should review 10% of each marker's set of assignments.
6. The moderator should review all of the assignments in the sample against the marking criteria.
7. The moderator should not change the mark(s) awarded to individual students but should make a judgement regarding the overall standards.
8. Where the moderator believes the overall standard to be unduly harsh or lenient, for example where there is a discrepancy of >5% in the mark distribution for the sample as a whole then the first marker should review the full set of assignments in consultation with the moderator. If there is a failure to reach agreement, the Head of Department (or nominated deputy) should identify a third, independent marker to adjudicate the decision.
9. The Department should retain a formal record confirming the operation of the moderation process.

Senate Regulation 7 'Governing the assessment of taught programmes of study' sets out the formal expectation of the University with regard to marking practices.

- 7.7 All summative assessment shall be subject to the same regulatory principles and procedures.
- 7.8 Student anonymity shall be preserved during the marking of all formal examinations. Summative coursework will be marked anonymously unless in the view of the department there are sound educational reasons for not doing so, for example to provide developmental feedback, or the type of assessment makes anonymous marking impractical. The marking processes for programmes of study will be reviewed through the annual and periodic review processes.
- 7.9 Boards of Examiners will have responsibility for the appropriateness of marking practices for the modules for which they carry responsibility and shall put in place explicit arrangements for the internal reconciliation of differences between internal markers against the written criteria.
- 7.10 All summative work which contributes towards the calculation of a student's degree classification shall be subject to a system of moderation by an internal examiner in one of the formats set out under (b) to (e) below. The University has adopted these definitions of marking practices:
 - (a) **Single marking:** Work is marked by a single marker. This practice may only be adopted for work which does not contribute to a student's overall degree classification.
 - (b) **Double marking:** two markers work to the same mark scheme. They may either (a) mark blind in parallel, or (b) the second marker reviews the reliability of the first marker's comments and gradings (rather than directly evaluating the students' work). An agreed mark must be reached for each piece of assessment. Double marking increases marking and feedback turnaround times, and should therefore only be used where close scrutiny of individual work is required; sampling or moderation should normally be sufficient. If there is an unresolved disagreement between the two markers, then another individual marker should be nominated to act as mediator.
 - (c) **Sampling:** work is marked by the first marker and a sample of work is seen by a second marker who blind marks (samples can be a random selection, a stratified random sample from different grade boundaries, borderline cases between grade boundaries,

or other samples as appropriate). If there is an unresolved disagreement between the two markers, then another individual marker should be involved.

- (d) **Moderation:** work is marked by a first marker. A second marker receives a full set of marks of the work and a sample of work (samples selected as described above in sampling) against which to test the robustness of the marking. They do not directly evaluate the students' work.
 - (e) **Blind marking:** work is provided to second markers or moderators as original copies without any grades or comments from the first marker.
 - (f) **Peer marking:** where summatively assessed, students who mark other students' work within a cohort should follow the same guidelines for first markers as described above. Second marking, sampling or moderation by internal examiners should be applied to ensure fairness and reliability, which may include scaling.
 - (g) **Automated marking:** Work is marked automatically by electronic or other means (either through Blackboard or through some other approved system).
- 7.11 As part of its responsibility for ensuring the appropriateness of marking for modules for which it is responsible, a Board of Examiners shall take particular care to ensure that marking practices produce reliable outcomes in modules, such as a project or dissertation, where marking is divided between multiple markers.
- 7.12 Any first marking not undertaken by an internal examiner, such as first marking undertaken by an associate tutor, shall be subject to a system of moderation by an internal examiner.
- 7.13 Postgraduate research students, including Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) and Graduate Research Assistants (GRA) may assist with teaching and assessment on programmes with the following restrictions:
- (a) they may not serve as members of Panels or Boards of Examiners;
 - (b) they may not act as sole markers of any piece of work which contributes to a final degree classification; such work will be subject to moderation by an internal examiner;
 - (c) responsibility for valid assessment outcomes rests entirely with the internal examiners.
- 7.14 Evidence must exist (and be retained for review purposes) which demonstrates that scrutiny of marking standards has taken place.

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