Marking and Moderation Policy

Introduction

The School is committed to ensuring validity, accuracy and consistency in its marking process. This Policy sets out how summative assessed work for the School's programme is marked and moderated. It enables staff involved in marking and moderating summative assessments completed by students to be "guided by clear processes which address the degree-awarding body's requirements. In particular arrangements for, and the degree-awarding body's definition of, first and second marking are clearly set out and applied and include guidance on how agreement will be reached on the final marks to be awarded", in accordance with the QAA's UK Quality Code: *Advice and Guidance: Assessment.*

This Policy has been developed in line with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, the QAA's Advice and Guidance on Assessment and External Expertise, and the UK Professional Standards Framework for Higher Education.

Related Policies and Procedures

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the School's General Academic Regulations, notably the Academic Framework, the Assessment and Classification Framework, the Security of Examinations and Assessments Procedures, Examinations and Assessments Regulations and Procedures for Students, the External Examiners Policy and Procedure, and the Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure.

Scope

This policy applies to all summative assessments, on all modules of the School's programmes. It does not cover the design of assessments, marking schemes or rubrics, or the scrutiny process before the release of assessments. Nor does it cover formative assessment marking. It relates solely to the marking process which continues up and until external moderation is completed.

Definitions

Definitions of terms can be found in the Glossary for the School's General Academic Regulations.

Training

It is the Director of Teaching and Learning's responsibility to ensure, both through recruitment and staff development, that markers are competent in their subject area, in marking assessments, and in giving feedback on assessments. In addition, the Director of Teaching and Learning shall support staff in developing and confirming their shared

understanding of professional judgment in relation to assessments. Staff development activities delivered by the Director of Teaching and Learning may include:

- New Marker Training;
- Refresher Training for experienced markers;
- Calibration Events, where new and experienced markers ensure that they are properly calibrated within a programme and with regard to academic levels when marking assessments that require judgment against a mark scheme or criteria.

Marking and Moderation Process

There are five stages in the marking and moderation process for summative assessments at the School:

1. Standardisation;
2. Marking;
3. Moderation;
4. Assessment Leader sign-off;
5. External Examiner.

Stage 1: Standardisation

The standardisation process precedes full marking of scripts and ensures that markers are confident that they are marking consistently in accordance with the mark scheme.

The Assessment Leader and markers are all expected to take part in this process by marking the standardisation scripts and then meeting (either in person, or online, or by conference call) to discuss the marks awarded, their approach to the mark scheme, and, where permitted, to make changes to the scheme to ensure it reflects the appropriate academic standards.

Assessment Leaders must choose one of the following methods of determining how many scripts are standardised:

i. At least one common script standardised by all markers; or

ii. At least three scripts standardised by all markers where the Assessment Leader has determined that one is a top mark script, one is a middle mark script, and one is fail mark script.

Markers must adhere to the agreed mark scheme. If after the standardisation meeting, markers encounter unusual answers not discussed during the standardisation meeting or included in the mark scheme, they are required to refer these to the Module Leader or their nominee.

Stage 2: Marking

The marker(s) mark the scripts allocated to them. Each script is marked once by a single marker.

Stage 3: Moderation

Moderation is where a moderator examines a batch of scripts from a single marker. There will be a single moderator for each assessment or module.

Pass/Fail Assessments
Where an assessment is pass/fail with no passing gradations, for each marker the Assessment Leader must create a moderation bundle consisting of:

	Skills/Discretionary	Mechanical
Fail Mark Scripts	All scripts that are 15 marks or fewer from the pass mark.	All scripts that are 5 marks or fewer from the pass mark.
Middle and Top Mark Scripts	10% of the scripts across both categories, rounded up to the nearest whole number.	5% of the scripts across bother categories, rounded up to the nearest whole number.

All Other Assessments
For each marker, the Assessment Leader must create a moderating bundle consisting of:

	Skills/Discretionary	Mechanical
Fail Mark Scripts	All scripts that are 15 marks or fewer from the pass mark.	All scripts that are 5 marks or fewer from the pass mark.
Middle Mark Scripts	2 scripts that are a bare pass, plus 2 other scripts.	
Top Mark Scripts	The lowest scoring top mark script plus the highest scoring top mark script.	

The moderator's role is to determine the following question: *Has the marker correctly applied the mark scheme and/or marking criteria to the scripts in the moderation bundle?*

If the answer is *yes*, the first marker's marks for all scripts (i.e., not just those included in the bundle) are approved, and considered to be the final mark awarded to the candidate.

If the answer is *no*, the moderator must decide between the following two choices:
1. If the moderator takes the view that there is an identifiable issue with the marker's marking (e.g., the treatment of a particular question), then the moderator must reject the sample and return it to the first marker, and ask them to remark all scripts (i.e., not just those included in the bundle) on this point, or, where multiple points are identified, on each point identified. The moderator must discuss the issue with the first marker to ensure that any differences in approach are resolved and inform the Director of Teaching and Learning of the issue.

2. If the moderator takes the view that there is no identifiable issue, and therefore the marking is inconsistent, they must reject the bundle and all scripts marked by the initial marker will be marked by a new first marker. Where this happens, the new marker will be subject to the moderation process.

The moderator will record their view on the sample(s) they receive in writing.

At any point in the moderation process, a moderator is entitled to ask to see other scripts from the same marker in order to determine whether the marker has correctly applied the mark scheme/criteria.

Stage 4: Assessment Leader Sign-Off

Where a moderator has determined that the marker has correctly applied the mark scheme/criteria to the script in the moderation bundle, the Assessment Leader can sign off the marks awarded by that marker.

Where a moderator has determined that the marker has not correctly applied the mark scheme/criteria to the scripts in the moderation bundle, the Assessment Leader must be satisfied that the remedial work required to all of the marker's scripts has been completed to satisfaction, at which point s/he can sign off the marks awarded by that marker.

Stage 5: External Examiner

The External Examiner must be sent the following:
   a. A schedule of final marks for all scripts;
   b. A sample size and range of scripts as follows:

No. of Students	Minimum No. of Assessments	Maximum No. of Assessments
Fewer than 10	All	-
11-100	10	20
101-399	10%	50

The composition of a sample must include:
   i.   All fails within 10% of the pass borderline; and
   ii.   An appropriate sample of assessments which fall within 2% below and 1% above the grade classification boundary; and
   iii. A sample of assessments throughout the top classification.

The External Examiner shall have the right to increase the size and composition of the sample as they see fit.

The rationale for the sample size and range required is to ensure that the External Examiner has sufficient evidence on which to come to a judgment on the School's classification standards. This approach offers assurances as to the integrity of the External Examiner procedure and gives confidence in the security of awards.

The External Examiner will be invited to confirm that, on the basis of the sample they have marked, the marking standards are reasonable and in line with sector standards.

Where an External Examiner has marked a whole cohort or whole grade cohort for an assessment, such as all fails, the External Examiner may recommend that an individual student's mark be amended. In such cases the rationale for the change should be agreed by the internal marker(s). Where a whole cohort or a whole cohort grade for an assessment has not been sampled, the marks of individual students may not be amended. To do so may lead to unfairness to other students whose work was not part of the sample.

Where an External Examiner finds repeated instances of cases where they disagree with the mark awarded, they may either recommend that a re-scaling of the marks be applied to the whole cohort or recommend that the whole cohort be remarked. The External Examiner Policy and Procedure sets out how the External Examiner may report confidentially directly to the Chief Executive at any time where they are concerned about standards and performance, particularly where they are concerned that assessments are being conducted in a way that jeopardises either the fair treatment of individual students or the standards of the School's awards.

Records and Auditing

The Assessment Leader is responsible for ensuring that:
- Scripts have been properly annotated to identify the individual marks and total mark awarded; *and,*
- Comments are recorded on the script or a marking scheme to provide feedback to students; *and*
- Scripts have been properly annotated to indicate that they have been moderated, if appropriate; *and,*
- Scripts have the final mark awarded clearly and unambiguously stated on the face of them; *and,*
- Moderation written findings are retained; *and,*
- Mark schedules are accurate; *and,*
- There is liaison with the Registry to ensure marks are recorded accurately on the student record and Board of Examiners papers.

Monitoring and Review

The Marking and Moderation Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Director of Teaching and Learning and any changes authorised by the Academic Council.

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Related documents: (eg associated forms, underpinning processes, related policies or overarching policies)	Security of Examinations and Assessments Procedures Assessments Approval Procedure Academic Framework Assessment and Classification Framework Examinations and Assessments Regulations and Procedures for Students Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure Board of Examiners: Membership and Terms of Reference

Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Brief summary of changes
1	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	13/01/2019	Original draft
2	Prof. Carl Gombrich (Director of Teaching and Learning)	10/03/2019	Minor wording changes
3	Prof. Chris Maguire (Registrar)	20/06/2019	Clarification of language. Single moderator for each assessment or module.
4	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	23/06/2019	Minor wording changes
5	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	04/11/2019	Updated links to relevant policies and procedures.
6	Academic Council	18/12/2019	Requires update given overall update of general academic regulations in light

			of decision to pursue NDAPs
7	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	20/12/2019	Correction of typos. Clarification on Assessment Leader
8	Academic Council	16/03/2020	Approved. Assessment Leader changed to "Assessment Lead"