

**UNIVERSITY of CUMBRIA ACADEMIC PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES**

**APPENDIX 3b**

**Procedures Governing the Marking and Moderation of Assessments**

## **Procedures Governing the Marking and Moderation of Assessments**

### **1. Marking of Assessments**

- 1.1 The principles for assessment, including the reliability of marking and moderation, are set out in Section F2 of the Academic Regulations. All markers must be familiar with the area of work being assessed. Where this is not possible, for example for practical or oral assessments, the Module Assessment Board may approve an alternate form of moderation (eg statistical inspection).

### **2 Moderation**

- 2.1 Moderation is the process of confirming with qualified colleagues that the standard and suitability of the assessments set, and the consistency of marking across tutors, modules, programmes and sites, is fair and appropriate.
- 2.2 The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring that coursework titles and briefs are monitored by sampling which is representative of the diversity of assessment items set.
- 2.3 All credit bearing assessment (except dissertations and theses submitted for the attainment of more than 20 credits which are subject to blind double marking), including answers to individual examination questions, is subject to moderation. The moderator is provided with the assessment criteria and marking scheme and has access to full set of scripts from which he/she selects a representative sample. The moderator may have sight of the feedback, annotated comments, and the mark awarded by the first marker.
- 2.4 Moderation is based on a representative sample equal to the square root of  $n$  ( $\sqrt{n}$ ) where  $n$  is the number of students in the module delivery group to a minimum of five items, plus all failed pieces. Where the number of failed items exceeds 3, the moderator may limit moderation to a representative sample of at least 3 of the failed items. The representative sample should include one script from each grade band. Where a module is delivered at different locations, each delivery group must be sampled, including groups based at collaborative partners.
- 2.5 A team marking approach to the assessment of modules may be used if appropriate, for example in some practice based modules, providing there are at least two markers within the team who assess work presented independently of each other.
- 2.6 Intra-scheme moderation occurs when a module has multiple offerings in a given academic session. An analysis and comparison of the provisional marks and of the mean and standard deviation for each of the module offerings is required. Where possible, cross-site marking moderation should occur based on the sample as in 2.4 above.
- 2.7 Outcomes of moderation should inform the Annual Monitoring process.

### **3 Blind Double marking**

- 3.1 Where a dissertation or thesis is presented for the achievement of 20 credits or more, all such work must be blind doubled marked. The second marker is provided with the assessment criteria and marking scheme and they assess the work independently without sight of the mark or feedback of the first marker. Students may be required to submit two copies of the work to enhance efficiency in the marking process.

### **4 Anonymous Marking**

- 4.1 As part of its commitment to fairness in assessment practice, the marking of examination scripts is anonymised. The University encourages programme teams to

consider where anonymous marking for coursework may be possible and to implement this within their overall assessment strategy. However, it is noted that for some types of assessment (eg art, work based learning) completely anonymised coursework will not be possible.

### **5 Agreement of provisional marks**

- 5.1 In moderation where the first marker and moderator's outcomes are largely in agreement (i.e. in the same grade band), the first mark stands. Averaging should not be employed to avoid regression to the mean and to ensure that there is neither advantage nor disadvantage to individual students, particularly in the sampling process related to moderation. However, if the marks differ by a grade band in most of the sample, a third marker must be employed to consider the marks of the whole cohort (or in the case of team marking, the whole of the work marked by that particular team marker). Where a third marker is employed, final provisional marks will be those of whichever marker is closest to the third marker. In exceptional cases the External Examiner may be called upon to adjudicate across the whole of the cohort. The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring that any differences between first markers and moderators are resolved.
- 5.2 In blind double marking, the marker and moderator should discuss their provisional marks and decide on the mark to be awarded.
- 5.3 The outcome of the marking process for each item of assessment must be documented, with the first marker, moderator's and agreed provisional marks being evident. This information should be made available to the External Examiner via a secure digital storage and be accessible to appropriate academic and administrative staff.

### **6 Disclosure of Provisional Marks**

- 6.1 Internally agreed feedback and provisional marks, for both examinations and coursework, should be disclosed to students within 20 working days (which excludes weekends, public holidays and periods of University closure only). This is before moderation by the External Examiner and confirmation by the Module Assessment Board.
- 6.2 In exceptional circumstances when it is not possible to complete the internal moderation process, the minimum expectation is that feedback, which may include the provisional mark, will be given within this period (ie 20 working days).
- 6.3 In both 6.1 and 6.2 the documentation must clearly state that the marks are still provisional and may be subject to alteration in the confirmatory process.

### **7 External Examiner Moderation**

- 7.1 External moderation is the process of ensuring via an external view that the suitability and standards of assessment tasks and the consistency of marking across tutors, modules are appropriate fair and comparable with standards in UK higher education in general.
- 7.2 External Examiners are required to approve all examination questions and briefs before publication. Additionally, they are asked to report on the appropriateness of modes of assessment for the modules learning outcomes and level of award.
- 7.3 The responsibilities of External Examiners are set out in Section J3 of the Academic Regulations and Appendix 4 of the procedures. The main concern of the External Examiner is the appropriateness of assessment and the standards of marking although they may exceptionally be consulted about the marks of an individual student (see 7.6).
- 7.4 External Examiners are asked to moderate both examination scripts and coursework and to ensure that each student is fairly placed in relation to the rest of the cohort.

Normally, unless the number of assessment items is sufficiently small for all to be scrutinised, an agreement with External Examiners will be reached on the sample of work to be submitted for moderation. This should include representative samples of each grade or class of degree, cases of failure and cases identified by staff as being of particular interest to ensure that each student is fairly placed in relation to the rest of the cohort, including samples from each delivery group where a module is delivered across different locations, and different collaborative partners where applicable. The External Examiner has the right to see the work of all students proposed for the highest available category of the award and for failure and samples of the work of students proposed for each category of award. They may see the work of all students assessed if they wish.

- 7.5 Internal markers must ensure that the External Examiner receives copies of their Assessment Criteria and Marking Schemes.
- 7.6 If an External Examiner is concerned about accuracy and consistency of marking and wishes to change marks, all work falling into the area of concern should be re-marked. The final decision on the mark(s) to be awarded in individual cases, or in the case of a whole cohort, lies with the Module Assessment Board.
- 7.7 All examination scripts and coursework contributing to the final assessment must be available to External Examiners should they be required. In particular, the work of any candidates likely to be discussed at the MAB should be made available to the External Examiner before the meeting and should have been fully internally moderated.
- 7.8 All assessment items submitted on-line should be made available for moderation by the External Examiner electronically, via the virtual learning environment (VLE).

Note: E-mail is not a secure method of transmission.

### **8 Provision of module marks to Student and Academic Administration Service (SAAS) and completion of mark sheets**

- 8.1 The mark sheet indicates the number of elements and their weightings which contribute to the total assessment of the module as validated. The mark sheets also indicate the mode of that assessment. Each module mark sheet includes information on the mean, standard deviation and fail rate for that module.

#### 8.1.1 Examinations

- (a) Marks for each module must be provided anonymously to the relevant Student and Academic Administration Service (SAAS) administrator on the Invigilator's Report Form. The raw marks should be expressed in percentage terms and rounded up or down after aggregation of individual marks as necessary (0.5 and above are raised).
- (b) The decoding will be completed by the relevant SAAS administrator. The decoded mark sheet will be used for the Module Assessment Board and copied to the Programme Leader.

#### 8.1.2 Coursework

The Module Leader (or other tutors who have marking responsibility for the module) is responsible for providing the raw mark (expressed as a percentage or where the module is Pass/Fail as 'P' or 'F') for each element of coursework to the relevant SAAS administrator through the agreed electronic process.

#### 8.1.3 Professional Performance

Where professional performance, for example a work-based placement, is assessed separately from any Programme module, this should be recorded on a separate mark sheet. This is normally expressed on a Pass/Fail basis.

## Procedures Governing the Marking and Moderation of Assessments

8.2 The aggregated module mark is calculated by the relevant SAAS administrator/SITS according to the validated weighted scores and is rounded up or down according to the same convention as in 8.1.1(a).

### **9 Review of the procedures**

9.1 The University reviews these procedures periodically.

# Procedures Governing the Marking and Moderation of Assessments

## MARKING AND MODERATION PROCESS (HE)

