



# Marking and Internal Moderation Practice Guidance

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The [University's Assessment Policy](#) sets out the principles and operational expectations for student assessment and feedback at Edinburgh Napier University. A key element of assessment is internal and external moderation to provide assurance that assessment and marking criteria have been appropriately used.
- 1.2 Effective moderation also offers an opportunity to examine feedback practices and provide assurances regarding the quality of feedback given to students. Moderation creates opportunities for the sharing of good assessment practices.
- 1.3 This guidance sets down the minimum standard for marking and internal moderation at Edinburgh Napier University.
- 1.4 Specific subject areas may require local measures to be taken and this should be decided at programme and/or School level.
- 1.5 Where Schools adopt local measures, these must be considered by School's Education and Student Experience Committee (SESEC). It is this School Committee which considers the need for the local measures, and their benefits, weighed against staff workload and capacity.
- 1.6 The guidance requires that internal moderation will be carried out on all assessments, whether coursework or examinations, and for all levels of academic study. Internal moderation should be documented to enable the External Examiner(s), Programme Assessment Boards, Associate Deans, Learning and Teaching, Deans of School and any other external audiences to be assured that internal moderation takes place and is part of a process assuring robust and consistent practices.

- 1.7 This guidance recognises that there are two types of internal moderation (see Section 2: Definitions).

## 2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- 2.1 **First Marking:** Decision-making on summative items of assessment for the award of a provisional mark/ grade.
- 2.2 **Seen Second Marking (Internal Moderation):** Marking of summative assessments - coursework/ scripts - WITH knowledge and/ or sight of the first marker's comments for quality assurance purposes.
- 2.3 **Unseen Second Marking:** Marking of summative assessments - coursework/ scripts - with NO sight or knowledge of the first marker's comments for quality assurance purposes.
- 2.4 **Internal Moderation of Assessment Method:** Carried out to ensure that assessments are well designed and fit for the purpose of assessing the learning outcomes of the module concerned.
- 2.5 **Moderation of students' work<sup>1</sup>:** Aims to ensure that the marking of assessments has aligned with required standards and is consistent and fair. Internal moderation should also contribute to module/ programme enhancement processes.

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<sup>1</sup> Internal moderation will always take place, even if students' work was subject to second marking – seen or unseen.

### **3. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF MARKING**

#### **3.1 First marking – overarching principles**

- The role of the first marker is to make a judgement on students' assessments<sup>2</sup> against a graded set of predetermined criteria as described in the assessment brief. This process results in the award of a provisional mark/ grade and, for coursework, individual provisional feedback.
- In the event that there is a team of first markers the expectation is that the team will undertake preparation in advance to ensure consistency and fairness in the process against the predetermined criteria.
- The first marker(s) should have knowledge of the module and its assessment strategy.

#### **3.2 Second marking key points:**

- There is no University requirement for second - seen or unseen - marking except in the case of dissertations/final year/MSc projects and/or where there are Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Body (PRSB) requirements. If second - seen or unseen - marking is being conducted, this may be done on a sample rather than the whole set of assessments submitted. It is a School-based decision as to whether a sample is second marked, seen or unseen, or if the whole

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<sup>2</sup> Specific arrangements for first marking and internal moderation (and where required second marking – seen or unseen) may be required for certain types of assessment e.g. presentations. In this instance 1.4 and 1.5 apply.

set of submissions for coursework/examination is subject to the process<sup>3 4</sup>

- Both the first and the second marks should be recorded for internal audit, but the student should only be given the final agreed mark.
- The student should only receive one set of comments which should reflect the final agreed mark.
- If the first marker and second marker disagree, it is expected that a resolution is reached. If this cannot be achieved, a third marker will be allocated, and their decision will be final. The process for deciding who the third marker is will be determined locally, under the overall oversight of the School's Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching.

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<sup>3</sup> It is recommended that when an assessment is first delivered (that is when it is a new item of coursework or examination) all submissions are unseen second marked.

<sup>4</sup> It is recommended that when assessors are new to the module, a sample of their first marking is seen second marked.

## 4. MODERATION

### 4.1 Moderation of assessment methods key points:

#### 4.1.1 Why do we moderate assessment methods?

Examinations<sup>5</sup>

- To ensure that the questions are appropriate for assessing the relevant learning outcomes and that the meaning of the questions is clear.

Coursework

- To ensure that assessment is appropriate to assess the relevant learning outcomes and the information is clear to the students.

#### 4.1.2. Which assessment methods should be moderated<sup>6</sup>?

All examination papers and summative class tests assessments which are SCQF Level 07 and above. This includes both the main diet and resit assessments.

All coursework methods of summative assessment which are SCQF Level 07 and above. This includes both the main diet and resit assessments.

#### 4.1.3 Who can moderate assessment methods?

At least one other suitably experienced academic member of staff or if required to meet PRSB requirements, a <sup>7</sup>consultant with appropriate industry/domain experience.

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<sup>5</sup> Examinations include open books examinations – moderation needs to have specific focus on the validity of the examination, for example, ensuring that more than the recall of information is sought.

<sup>6</sup> It is expected that pre-moderation will include focus on the Assessment Brief and rubrics/ other assessment methods.

<sup>7</sup> The location of these records needs to be agreed

#### 4.1.4 When?

##### Examinations

- Before issue to/ feedback from the External Examiner<sup>8</sup> and/or before the students sit the exam.

##### Coursework

- Before being issued to students.

**Note:** The process must take place when an assessment item and/or module is newly introduced or changed in any way.

#### 4.1.5 Record keeping

A record must be kept of the moderation of assessment methods process – often referred to as the moderation of assessment form. Where the moderator wishes to draw attention to something e.g. the resit assessment being substantially different to the main diet or examples of good practice, this should be noted on the form. The Module Leader will include reference to the moderation of assessment methods on the moderation of assessment form.

#### 4.2 Post Assessment Moderation of students' work - key points:

- 4.2.1 Unless a PRSB requires internal moderation on all items of coursework/ scripts, the first marker or internal moderator identifies an appropriate sample of coursework/ scripts<sup>9</sup>. Normally the sample is formed by a square root sample<sup>10</sup> of the number of students on the module and applies to all assessment items which have met the threshold for a pass (above 40%<sup>11</sup> for undergraduate

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<sup>8</sup> Unless required by the PRSB, the External Examiner is only involved in this process for SCQF Level 9 and above.

<sup>9</sup> Normally this sample will include examples of high, average and low marks/ grades

<sup>10</sup> Where this number is less than 6 all coursework/ scripts will be internally moderated.

<sup>11</sup> 50% in some cases for PRSB requirements



level modules and 50% for postgraduate modules<sup>12</sup>). In addition to the square root sample, all items of assessment which have not met the threshold for a pass will be internally moderated.

- 4.2.2 Internal moderation is required for the main diet and resubmissions/resits. Its purpose is to facilitate a 'stepping-back' quality process and sense-checking that the marks/ grades and feedback align with the criteria and have been consistently and fairly applied.
- 4.2.3 The internal moderator needs to be suitably qualified but does not need to be a subject expert.
- 4.2.4 A record must be kept of the internal moderation process identifying which pieces of work were included in the moderation sample on the moderation of marks form. This form is made available to the external moderator (the external examiner).
- 4.2.5 Schools should decide how internal moderation of practical assessments or presentations will be carried out taking into account the nature of the subject and any PRSB requirements. This should be documented in the School's ESEC minutes.
- 4.2.6 Where internal moderation has been applied to a sample and the moderator finds the first marking to have been valid then no further action is required.
- 4.2.7 If the internal moderator identifies issues with the first marking, this will be dealt with locally in the first instance (i.e. involving the internal moderator in discussion with the 1<sup>st</sup> marker). If unresolved, then advice will be sought from the School's Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching (or their designated other e.g. Subject Group Lead). The action taken may be for the first marker to amend/adjust marks/grades on all scripts/assessments accordingly. Alternatively, a process of second marking – seen or

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<sup>12</sup> There are some exemptions to this – refer to the Approved Exemptions document within the [Academic Regulations](#).

unseen - might be required. The Moderation of Marks Form will make reference to what was required, why and by whom.

- 4.2.8 Where internal moderation has been applied to all scripts/assessments, rather than a sample, and the internal moderator is not confident in respect of the marks/ grades awarded and/or the feedback, the first marker will be notified and advice in terms of next steps sought from the Subject Group Lead<sup>13</sup>, as required.
- 4.2.9 Provisional marks/ grades of coursework and feedback may be provided to the student after the process of internal moderation is completed, that is, before the Programme Assessment Board sits. Marks/ grades are subject to ratification at the Programme Assessment Board. It should be made clear to students that these marks are provisional pending ratification.

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<sup>13</sup> Schools may decide local arrangements rather than refer to the Subject Group Lead.

**Appendix A:****To consider when pre-moderating assessment methods:**

Does the assessment appropriately cover the learning outcomes being assessed?

Does the assessment give accurate, clear instructions/guidance to the student?

Does the assessment provide clear and appropriate assessment criteria for marking?

Are there sufficient opportunities for students to demonstrate critical thought (to an appropriate level)?

Are any additional materials/supplies that are needed to complete the assessment indicated?

Is the level of work and effort needed as indicated in the module record in CME?

Have the assessment question(s) been used previously?

Is the format and presentation of the assessment of an appropriate standard?

Is there any good practice you think should be more widely disseminated?

**Appendix B: To consider when moderating students' work:**

Is there a clear indication of the marks/ grades assignment to the students' work?

Have the assessment criteria been applied consistently and fairly?

Has all of the students' work been marked?

Are there any errors in the summation of the marks (particularly pertinent to exams)?

Are the marks/ grades consistent with the comments provided?

Is the feedback useful to the students to help them to improve?

Does the feedback clearly indicate to the students where they have done well?

Is there any good practice<sup>14</sup> you think should be more widely disseminated?

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<sup>14</sup> Good practice refers to practice which is deemed worthy of sharing beyond the immediate academic team