

Information sheet:

Marking Procedures - 2020-21



Introduction

The purpose of this information sheet is to provide a summary of the changes to Marking Procedures **being introduced from Semester 2 in academic year 2020-21**. These arrangements will apply in full from Semester 2 onwards.

The information sheet covers the following areas of change:

- Clarification and changes to terminology for second (sample) marking, double marking, and moderation
- Clarification and amendment of the moderation process (previously called second sample marking), particularly where there is more than one first marker
- Clarification and amendment of the minimum sample size and composition for the moderation of scripts
- Clarification about communicating with students about the inclusion of their work in a moderated sample
- A further change planned for later this year to the way External Examiners are provided with access to samples of work.

A background to the changes

Although the University has consistently used the terms moderation, second (sample) marking and double marking, they do not accurately describe each process. The term second marking, for example, is actually a form of moderation. The changes to our terminology and definitions now more accurately describe the processes being undertaken.

There is a change to the moderation process (previously termed second marking) by which different batches of markers are aligned. In order to reduce staff time for marking and moderation, and reduce delays of results release to Boards of Examiners, this type of moderation should now be undertaken by a single individual. The moderation sample must consist of the higher of either (a) ten pieces of the submitted pieces of work, or (b) 20 per cent of the submitted pieces of work, up to a maximum of 30 pieces of work. This change simplifies the process, ensuring that an individual moderator is not overburdened while providing a sufficient sample by which to quality assure the marking.

A quick overview of the changes

Double marking

- The categories where double marking is applied are appropriate and remain unchanged;
- double marking should be a marking process in which both markers mark the work independently and agree a common mark, rather than a moderation process.

Second (sample) marking

- The "second (sample) marking" procedure is a moderation process and will now be set out as such;
- the term "first marker" is retained;
- the term "moderator" replaces the term "second (sample) marker";

- currently the first marker marks all the work and the second marker samples the work in order to ascertain whether the first marker is consistent and meets the learning outcome criteria. This is now termed 'moderation' and the first marker is termed 'the marker'. The documentation has been revised to make it clear this is a moderation process.

Moderation

- The process of moderation is currently termed 'second sample marking' (where it is required as there is a more than one set of individuals marking the scripts of a large cohort and no one individual looks all the scripts); it is complex, cumbersome and time-consuming, and slows down feedback to students, and has been discontinued as part of these changes;
- where there is double marking, moderation is not required or appropriate, because either it covers assessment that cannot be repeated, or it involves specialist areas (e.g. dissertations);
- where there is sampling, the same individual should moderate the whole cohort, however large. The sample now:
 - will comprise the higher of either (a) ten pieces of the submitted pieces of work, or (b) 20 per cent of the submitted pieces of work, up to a maximum of 30 pieces of work;
 - Will include a sample of work from marks or grades spread across the range;
 - must include work marked by all first markers, where there is more than one.
- It was recognised that some will see this as overburdening the moderator. The total volume of moderation will, however, be reduced considerably, administrative time will be saved, students will receive feedback more quickly, and student profiles for Boards of Examiners will be produced in a timelier fashion. There will only be an increase in activity where moderation is not currently being conducted despite the requirement for it.

Third Marking

- The process by which a third marker resolves a marking dispute should be retained;
- the terminology has been revised to ensure that the term "third marker" does not imply that the moderator is a second "marker" – the term has been changed to "re-marker";
- where the current procedure requires that this is conducted by a "senior" member of staff, this is changed to "a member of staff who is identified by the Head of School as having appropriate experience".

Samples

- The minimum size of the sample to be moderated will not change from the current second marking sample size;
- there should be no specific requirements for the selection of scripts in the sample, other than they should be spread from across the range of marks.

Feedback

- The requirement that feedback for moderated work may only come from the first marker remains unchanged;

- the requirement that where both double markers wish to contribute feedback this should form a single source of feedback agreed and provided to the student by the first marker remains unchanged.

Identification of moderation

- Students should not be informed that their scripts formed part of a moderation sample under any circumstances.

External Examiners

- A new section on External Examiners has been added to outline the role of the External Examiner to moderate the marks or grades. This was previously set out in separate External Examiner documentation.
- Where the previous requirement (set out in the External Examiner Handbook) was for Module External Examiners to review draft examination papers, from September 2021 they will be asked to review any type of assessment, not just examinations.

Further developments planned

A further proposal is planned for next semester to enable External Examiners to select their own sample (with supporting guidance). This aims to provide greater flexibility and further reduce the administrative burden on staff. There are a number of technical issues to resolve prior to bringing this proposal forward.

How did these changes come about?

These amendments are the result of a learning and teaching focussed review of the Marking Procedures carried out by a task-and-finish group of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Working Group in 2019-20. The group included academic staff drawn from each Faculty. The proposals were subsequently scrutinised and refined via the University Committee structure, and formally approved by the Education and Student Experience Committee on 18 November 2020.

Find out more

The revised Marking Procedures document, which sets out the requirements in full, can be accessed [here](#).

Updated template to record moderation and template to record double marking are available [here](#) and also on the [QSO A-Z](#).

Please address any queries to your [Faculty Director of Quality](#) in the first instance or quality@canterbury.ac.uk