

## **Policy on the Moderation of Assessed Work**

<b>Responsibility for Policy:</b>	Registrar and Deputy Chief Executive
<b>Relevant to:</b>	All LJMU Staff and Academic Partnerships
<b>Approved by:</b>	Academic Board, June 2018
<b>Responsibility for Document Review:</b>	Academic Registry
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### **RELEVANT DOCUMENTS**

- N/A

### **RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS**

- Academic Framework Regulations Postgraduate Taught Programmes 2018/19 (excluding programmes where delivery commenced prior to September 2016)
- Academic Framework Regulations Postgraduate Taught Programmes 2018/19 (delivery commenced prior to September 2016)
- Academic Framework Regulations Undergraduate Programmes 2018/19 (excluding programmes where delivery commenced prior to September 2016)
- Academic Framework Regulations Undergraduate Programmes 2018/19 (delivery commenced prior to September 2016)

## A policy on the moderation of assessed work

### Introduction

This policy refers to (and should be read in conjunction with) the Academic Framework Regulations<sup>1</sup>.

This policy applies to summative assessments<sup>2</sup> conducted for the purposes of awarding credit, the right to progress through a programme of study, or of determining a final award. Summative assessments are validated within the 'Module Proforma' and amended only with the approval of the designated School/Department and Faculty authorities. External Examiners are required to approve the form and content of all summative assessments at all levels in order to ensure that all students will be assessed fairly. Therefore external approval is required prior to the publication of assessment information to students and also for any subsequent changes to assessment requirements (nature and/or timing).

Coursework and written examinations must be anonymised<sup>3</sup> prior to marking, in accordance with the University's policy<sup>4</sup>. In order to protect both staff and students, a member of staff who has a relationship with a student must withdraw from the Board of Examiners for the duration of the discussion regarding said student, and should not be involved in marking and moderation of the student's work. In relation to summative assessment<sup>5</sup>, moderation is a process to ensure that marking is consistent, fair and aligned with criteria<sup>6</sup>.

### Roles and responsibilities in the marking of assessed work

The **first marker** (or markers in the event of 'group marking') marks all submitted summative assessments in accordance with the agreed criteria/marketing scheme.

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<sup>1</sup> All (four) Academic Frameworks share a common regulation 'C2.1:

*"There must be marking and moderation procedures at all Levels, consistent with the Academic Framework's moderation policy. All members of the teaching staff of the University are examiners of the University. The School Director/Department Head has responsibility for ensuring that the processes of marking and moderation operate in accordance with the University regulations. Coursework and written examinations must be anonymised prior to marking, in accordance with the University's policy".*

<sup>2</sup> The purpose of summative assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes of the modules, whereas formative assessment has a developmental purpose and is designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and on how it can be improved and/or maintained.

<sup>3</sup> Anonymity ends when the final overall mark/grade for an assessment is transcribed to a mark-sheet.

<sup>4</sup> Please see marking of anonymised coursework policy <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/academic-quality-and-regulations/academic-policy>

<sup>5</sup> Irrespective of whether the summative assessment is taken at the first or any subsequent opportunity.

<sup>6</sup> Chapter B6 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, *Assessment of Students and Recognition of Prior Learning* (October 2013) states that processes for marking assessments and for moderating marks are clearly articulated and consistently operated by those involved in the assessment process (indicator 13). Moderation is not an exercise in changing marks for individual students.

This should include work submitted late without an agreed extension<sup>7</sup> for the purpose of feedback, although no mark will be recorded against the student record. Evidence of marking and an indication of how marks/grades have been awarded should be available (e.g. on script, or feedback sheet).

A **second marker** marks the moderation sample (see below) using the same criteria/marketing scheme as the first marker. The purpose of the second marker is to ensure consistency by confirming the marks awarded by the first marker(s) for a sample of work. The marks of the first marker will stand, except in the following circumstances:

- Where a second marker identifies in the sample the inconsistent application of the assessment criteria by the first marker, the work of the whole cohort should be remarked. However where the work has been marked by a team of markers and moderation identifies inconsistencies in the marking of an individual marker then scaling or remarking should be applied to all the work marked by that individual.
- If there are issues of marks being consistently different (+/- 5 percentage points) between the first and second marker, the two markers should agree the marks and then an identical scaling should be applied to the entire cohort's work, not just individual summative assessments in a moderation sample. The merit order must not be changed by the scaling process. Disagreements which cannot be resolved by the two markers may require further samples to be taken and/or arbitration by the module/programme leader if the interpretation of the grading criteria cannot be resolved.

The **external examiner** will be provided with samples in a timely manner to allow them to engage with the process of moderation of assessed work. Samples of assessed work will include evidence of second marking and must align with the minimum thresholds outlined below and be of sufficient size to enable the examiner to form a view as to whether the internal marking has properly assessed student performance against the appropriate standards. External examiners must ensure that assessments are conducted within the approved Academic Framework Regulations, comment on the effectiveness of the assessment and are expected to attend Boards of Examiners.

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<sup>7</sup> University Academic Framework Regulations

## Minimum thresholds in the moderation of summative assessments

Marking and moderation procedures at all Levels should include sighted<sup>8</sup> double marking of at least 10%<sup>9</sup> of students' attempts at summative assessments (or 10 pieces, whichever is the greater) and for all summative assessments for modules of fewer than 10 students. Dissertations<sup>10</sup> (or their equivalents which have a value of at least 40 credits) should be unsighted<sup>11</sup> double marked.

If an assessment does not involve the production of physical evidence, as with some types of performance or presentation, markers must make clear what processes are in place to ensure consistency of marking and maintenance of standards. For example, presentations and performances could be recorded and examples shared and discussed at a meeting convened for that purpose. Where double marking has been considered and is not possible, the module handbook should indicate what moderation procedures are used instead.

## Oversight of moderation

The completion of the module mark verification report forms part of the evidence that internal and external moderation has taken place<sup>12</sup>. The mark verification interface is located in the WebHub and the module leader must confirm that moderation has taken place by completing the module mark verification report in relation to a number of prompts.

Oversight of all marking and moderation activity is invested in Boards of Examiners. Prior to a Board of Examiners, the Director is responsible for ensuring that procedures are followed with regard to the consideration and approval of the form and content of all summative assessments that count towards the assessment of the programme and its module(s). The Director is also responsible for the completion of the moderation process, for ensuring that marks achieved by students for each summative assessment task are finalised by the deadline and that External Examiners have been involved in the moderation process.

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<sup>8</sup> Where the second marker is aware of the marks awarded by the first marker.

<sup>9</sup> This means 10% of the validated summative assessment item (scripts) (or 10 pieces, whichever is the greater) for each module. The module leader will identify a second marker before the module is delivered. Ideally this would be a colleague who also teaches on the module or a member of the programme team in the event of difficulties. The 10% sample should include the entire range of marks. Consideration will also need to be given to large cohorts with multiple markers as to the number of scripts required from each marker. This may result in more than 10% of scripts being double marked. For large cohorts it is advisable to start second marking before all marking is completed.

<sup>10</sup> This requires all dissertations and their equivalents which have a value of at least 40 credits to all be unsighted double marked, not just a 10% sample. This means most L6 undergraduate and all postgraduate dissertations will be unsighted double marked.

<sup>11</sup> Where the second marker is unaware of the marks awarded by the first marker, whose roles shall both be designated at the outset.

<sup>12</sup> Please note that the Data Protection Act (1998) and General Data Protection Regulation (2018) permit students to access any comments about their work made by internal or external markers on any scripts, coursework or internal correspondence.

In order to ensure the above:

- External Examiners will moderate a sample of assessed work (and will be given access to electronically submitted materials);
- Mark-bearing credit and RP(E)L Work submitted in support of a claim for RP(E)L should be assigned a mark by the Assessor. This work and mark is then moderated by an external examiner of the programme concerned before credit is awarded by the FRG<sup>13</sup>.
- Verification of the completeness and accuracy of marks for assessed work by Module Leaders is recorded in the on-line Mark Verification Interface;
- All marks for all summative assessments will be entered onto the gradebook of the Student Record System by the published deadline, representing the finalisation of the module mark;
- Module Leaders will confirm the completeness and accuracy of all marks ahead of a Board of Examiners;
- Student module mark data will be aggregated and reports will be run listing all progressing, non-progressing and completing students;
- Performance within assessments on modules is displayed in the Programme Performance Reports and module leaders are expected to comment on any interesting outliers at Boards of Examiners.

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<sup>13</sup> Please see section 9.2 of the RP(E)L Policy