

Disclosure of Assessment Results and Marks: Advice and Statement of Procedures

[TQA Manual - Introduction and Contents](#)

[Partner Institutions: All partner institutions delivering programmes validated by the University of Exeter are required to observe these procedures.]

1 Introduction

1.1 The disclosure to students of information about their performance in assessments enhances the learning experience, preparing them better for the intellectual challenges ahead both in their programmes of study and their career aspirations.

1.2 The Data Protection Act 1998 also imposes a variety of obligations on holders of information including universities. The advice and procedures that follow take account of the Act, the general implications of which for the University are summarised through Exeter's [Data Protection web site](#) .

2 Disclosure of Results

2.1 The results of a summative assessment at year-end or equivalent may be released to students, after recommendation by the relevant Board of Examiners, as lists reporting pass/fail or classification of award resulting from summative assessment.

2.2 Results may be published by individual notification to students and/or by public notice. The latter process should not be used alone if the students concerned are not currently resident in Exeter or at the partner institution.

3 Disclosure of Marks

3.1 Marks for coursework should be made available by the College (or partner institution) to students, once they have been agreed by the internal markers concerned. Where such marks form part of the assessment towards a final award or classification, disclosure should always be on the basis that they are only indicative, and have no formal standing until moderated by the external examiner(s) and confirmed by the Board of Examiners appointed for that purpose.

3.2 Marks for examinations and other summative assessments should be made available to students as follows:

- (a) for examinations and other summative assessments undertaken in mid-year (e.g. in the January examination period): once marks have been agreed by the internal markers concerned;

(b) for examinations and other summative assessments undertaken towards the end of an academic year (or year equivalent): once the end-of-year result has been confirmed by the Board of Examiners.

Such marks are most appropriately released through the home College (but see also 4 below) and, in the case of (a), on the basis that they are subject to moderation and confirmation by the Board of Examiners. Marks for Flexible Combined Honours students should be released through the Flexible Combined Honours Office or its designated representatives.

The same principles of disclosure should be applied to the taught components of postgraduate programmes, varied as necessary according to the timing of the assessments.

3.3 All marks should be communicated either in person or in writing to students individually, not by public notice.

3.4 Marks should always be disclosed as whole percentages, in line with approved University assessment procedures.

3.5 Final mark lists, with the lists of decisions agreed by the Boards of Examiners should be retained by Colleges.

3.6 Student handbooks should contain reference to the status of marks released under this procedure.

4 Examination and Other Assessment Scripts

4.1 Colleges are reminded that feedback to students on examination and other assessments is an important element of the learning process. The feedback process should include feedback on all assessments and the return of coursework assessment within 4 term weeks to students. The date at which feedback is provided should be published to students in advance of submission, and overall assessment schedules should be taken into account to ensure that students will have the opportunity to make improvements on the basis of the feedback provided in future assessments. Returning coursework with feedback is likely to be helpful to many students ahead of forthcoming examinations, while the return of annotated formative examination scripts could inform subsequent module or even programme choice.

4.2 College Managers should record the maximum amount of time taken for assessments to be returned on a per module basis, and that data should be used in annual module review and annual programme monitoring.

4.3 Under the Data Protection Act 1998 students may make a subject access request (for a fee of £10) to the University Data Protection Officer for copies of personal data on them held by the University. This access extends to manual records (both existing and future) including comments entered by examiners on scripts or on cover sheets. Although there is no right of access to the scripts themselves any comments entered on them by others are accessible. The paragraphs that follow provide advice to Colleges.

4.4 Colleges should review their processes for the marking of scripts, considering the language/ tone of examiners' remarks and how they are recorded. For instance, to save the copying of whole scripts as a result of a subject access request, it might be decided by a College that all remarks would be better confined to a cover sheet. Colleges will also want to advise their staff not to use defamatory or embarrassing language.

4.5 Colleges, while commended to heed the good practice suggested in 4.1 above, should note that they are under no obligation to retain scripts/remarks purely for the purpose of the Act. Once the usefulness of the scripts and remarks, for instance in the context of examiners' meetings, academic audit purposes or feedback to students, is past, they can be destroyed.

4.6 This right of access to information will also extend to examiners' report forms for theses and dissertations.

4.7 Examination marks are given a temporary exemption from the subject access provisions in the form of an extension, to ensure that students cannot use their subject access rights to discover their marks before they are actually announced. If a subject access request is received, the University is not obliged to respond until the earlier of (a) 40 days after the announcement of the results, or (b) five months from receipt of the request. Therefore, if the University takes longer than five months to process the examination results, it could be forced to make them available under the subject access rules.

4.8 With reference to 4.7, Colleges should also be aware that raw marks fall within the terms of the Act. Therefore, for instance, in the case of unseen second marking, both initial marks would have to be reported if they had been retained within College records (held either within a College office or by an individual member of staff).

5 Student Enquiries by Telephone

5.1 As specified under 3.3 above, students will normally be expected to receive their results in person or in writing. Exceptionally, and by prior agreement in each case, results may be disclosed by telephone by a clearly identified contact in the College or other academic unit.

5.2 In disclosing results and marks by telephone, the following practice should be observed:

- (a) Results/marks should only be released to the student concerned.
- (b) On receipt of a call from an enquiring student, reasonable steps should be taken to ascertain that the caller is indeed the student concerned (e.g. checking date of birth, home address, student registration number, etc).
- (c) When sure of the caller's identity, the final result/marks may be released (subject to the strictures outlined above).

(d) If the marks have yet to be confirmed by a Board of Examiners, it should be made clear to the student that they are simply indicative and subject to future moderation.

(e) Such conversations should be confirmed in writing to the student and a note retained on the student's file.

6 Enquiries by Third Parties

6.1 Results/marks should only be released to the student concerned and not to his/her parents or any other third party unless:

(a) explicit consent (i.e. in writing) has been obtained from the student; or

(b) the University is required by law or statutory instrument (as may be in the case of sponsors); or

(c) where required to prevent or detect crime; or

(d) where required to release to a third party who is sub-contracted by the University to process the data in a way that meets Data Protection Act regulations.

6.2 Sponsors may have agreements in place enabling the disclosure of a student's academic performance. This would normally be outlined in the Terms and Conditions for the Award Holders. If there is any doubt about disclosures please check with the Data Protection Officer, dataprotection@exeter.ac.uk

7 Academic Appeals

7.1 The procedures to be used when students wish to appeal against their academic results are contained in the University Calendar (<http://www.admin.ex.ac.uk/calendar/live/progdev/appeals.htm>).

8 Transcripts

8.1 A complete transcript, including marks for assessed modules at all levels, will be made available without charge to each student after the completion of their programmes and approval of award/graduation. Further copies will be charged for. Transcripts will be issued by the University's Examinations Office or by the partner institution as appropriate.

8.2 Transcripts showing marks will only be made available to potential employees or other organisations on the student's written request.

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