

Supplementary Guidance on Assessment, Marking and Feedback

[TQA Manual - Introduction and Contents](#)

This paper, which may be expected to be updated from time to time, brings together advice on miscellaneous assessment matters that are not covered by more formal codes of good practice and statements of procedure.

The following matters are addressed in the sections below:

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1 [Assessment and Feedback](#)

- 1.1 All undergraduates* should have undertaken some assessment and received feedback upon it within six weeks of commencing their programme;
- 1.2 There should always be more than one assessment element to a module at Level 0 - 3, although it is permitted to have only one summative element to the module;
- 1.3 Students should always have the opportunity to receive feedback on their progress in a module before the final assessment elements of the module take place;
- 1.4 Students should be asked a specific question within module evaluation about the appropriateness of the assessment and feedback on the module;
- 1.5 Students should be informed in advance of assessment items and submission dates (see 1.2 of the 'Guidelines and the Setting and Submission of Assessment').

*This includes all undergraduates new to the University; consideration must therefore be given to the assessment and feedback needs of students who join a programme after the general commencement of that programme.

For more information and resources, please visit the University's [Assessment and Feedback Centre](#).

2 [Marking Strategy](#)

- 2.1 Colleges should formulate an assessment marking strategy with appropriate reference to the mix of approaches detailed in the QAA code of practice on the assessment of

students. The strategy adopted by a College should be identified in its approved assessment conventions, reported to the Board of Examiners and its effectiveness subject to discussion with the external examiner(s) at the conclusion of the assessment process (to allow the external to comment as appropriate in her/his annual report).

2.2 The minimum requirements for this strategy should comprise:

- Every examination script should be marked anonymously.
- All assessment components which individually contribute more than 75% of the marks of a 30 credit or larger module and which are not anonymously assessed should be double blind marked.
- Continuous assessments should be assessed anonymously as far as is practical where they contribute to 50% or more of the total marks available for a module.
- All assessment components in which anonymous assessment is not possible should be double marked, which may take the form of peer marking as the second form of marking, except where the contribution to the final summative assessment is insignificant.
- Every examination script and other assignment counting towards a final award must be subjected to one of the following assessment strategies:
 - double marking
 - moderation
- Additionally:
 - all failures and borderline scripts should be subject to moderation or double marking.
 - all failures in level 1 and other assessments that do not count towards a final award should be moderated or double marked.

2.3 Definitions adopted for the above process are as follows:

Double marking: The process by which a piece of work is marked by two *markers*, who agree a final mark (or marks) for the purpose of classification. In 'double blind' marking, which is a version of double marking, neither marker is aware of the other's assessment decision in formulating their own mark.

Sample: The complete set.

Indicative corrective action, if major discrepancy between markers:

Involvement of third academic as moderator.

Moderation: The process by which marks are checked against feedback to ensure that the mark awarded is appropriate (for the purpose of assuring the standard of the award).

Sample: The complete set or sub-sample

Indicative corrective action:

Remarking of whole set, followed by moderation by third marker.

- 2.4 The strategy should also state the procedures in place to analyse the marking trends of individual markers to facilitate comparisons and identify unreliability.

3 Marking Criteria

- 3.1 The following scheme for marking criteria is commended to Colleges and other academic units as representing minimum good practice:
- (a) All Colleges should publish marking criteria in the student handbooks for their taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
 - (b) Marking criteria should be consistently applied in the assessment processes for all modules within a College.
 - (c) College marking criteria should observe the University's published percentage boundaries for degree classification and other levels of performance.
 - (d) As is the University's convention, all marking processes should be numerically based.
 - (e) Where used and whenever requested by the external examiners, model answers and marking schemes should be submitted to the external examiner(s) at the same time as draft examination papers and other assessments.

4 Generic Mark Scheme

The University has a generic marking scheme which draws on QAA¹ and SEEC² guidelines, and characterise the level of complexity, demand and relative autonomy expected of students at each level of the curriculum. The scheme, which includes Taught masters programmes can be found [here](#).

5 Marking the Work of Students Diagnosed with Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulties (where competence of language is not being assessed)

5.1 *Advice to markers of exam scripts:*

- (a) Work should be marked for knowledge of the individual course of study and not penalised for language that is unreliable or not fluent, and that is no part of course syllabus.
- (b) When marking dyslexic candidates' scripts, examiners are asked to focus on the **clarity of the argument**, rather than on details of expression. Attempts should be made to separate marking of transcription errors and marking of content. However, while sympathetic treatment of assessed work submitted by dyslexic students involves disregarding errors of spelling and grammar, the communication itself must be effective. If academic standards are to be safeguarded, sympathetic treatment cannot extend to written expression so poor that **coherence and intelligibility** are at issue.

¹Quality Assurance Agency frameworks for higher education qualifications and credit
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Qualifications/Pages/Academic-Credit.aspx>

² Southern England Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer
<http://www.seec.org.uk/academic-credit/seec-credit-level-descriptors-2010> Accessed 1 May 2011

(c) The written work of candidates with dyslexia may be characterised by some or all of the following and **should not be penalised**:

- omitted words/letters/syllables/endings or punctuation;
- spelling mistakes other than when certain technical terms are required
- bizarre word substitutions e.g. 'venerable' for 'vulnerable'
- excessive or misplaced punctuation;
- repeated information or phrases – this would not be detected by a dyslexic student proofreading their own draft;
- unsophisticated language structures – in order to avoid grammatical errors, many students with dyslexia adopt simplified language structures, which do not necessarily denote unsophisticated thinking; others have overlong or rambling sentences;
- simplified vocabulary – in order to avoid spelling errors, many dyslexic students adopt a simplified vocabulary when writing;
- difficulties with sequencing or word-finding may produce a stilted style of writing which may not match the student's oral performance in seminars etc.

5.2 *When computers have been used:*

Some exam scripts are likely to be word-processed and spell-checked, you should be aware of the limitations of a spellchecker. Some of the problems likely to remain in dyslexic students' work after spell-checking include:

- homophone substitutions (e.g. there/their, effect/affect, course/coarse)
- incorrect word substitutions, (distance for disturbance)
- American spelling (e.g. colorful, fueling).

6 Drafts: Feedback and Marking

6.1 Colleges and other academic units should discuss and be clear about the rationale for any system they adopt for the provision of feedback and/or marks on draft assignments. Equality of approach within modules should be a particular objective, with special reference to projects and dissertations that can involve the participation of a large number of staff.

6.2 The following advice is offered:

- (a) Discussion of the rationale should address the potential for inconsistency of practice between modules pitched at the same level and that require similar types of assignment.
- (b) As a minimum, a consistent approach should be observed by all staff contributing to an individual module, including the amount of feedback that can be normally expected by students.
- (c) Student handbooks or module documentation should indicate, where appropriate, if feedback on drafts is provided, and what is required of students if they are to benefit.
- (d) Clear deadlines should be identified for the submission of drafts attracting feedback.

- (e) External examiners should be made aware of College policy on the extent to which students are supported by feedback on draft assignments.

7 Scaling of Marks

7.1 *Definitions:*

- (a) Any system employed by the Board of Examiners for adjusting agreed examination marks within a module to correct abnormal group performance; and/or
- (b) Any system employed by a College on a regular basis for adjusting raw marks according to an agreed formula to derive agreed examination marks.

7.2 *Management of Scaling*

In the case of (a):

- the raw marks, together with the rationale under which they were awarded, should always be made available to the Board of Examiners;
- scaling should be applied fairly to all students taking the module and not just a problematic subset (e.g. failures);
- external examiners should always be consulted about the process where the marks relate to summative assessments;
- decisions consequent to the scaling process should be clearly minuted by the Board;
- the system used by the Board should be transparent to students.

In the case of (b):

- the system must be transparent to students;
- external examiners and Boards of Examiners should be made aware of the system.

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January 2007

This mark scheme is intended as a guide to aid the marking of work contributing towards the assessment of undergraduate programmes. This mark scheme indicates within what mark range a piece of work should be placed when it is assessed if it meets the criteria indicated in the descriptions tied to that mark range. The mark scheme should be interpreted within the context of the intended learning outcomes for the assessment in question.

Last updated September 2009

Last reviewed September 2011

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