

**CARDIFF**  
UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL  
**CAERDYDD**

# Marking & Moderation Policy

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### Scope

From 1st August 2024, this Policy outlines the principles that allow Cardiff University to effectively discharge its responsibilities for the oversight and management of Marking & Moderation at Cardiff University including:

1. the information needed to support marking and moderation;
2. the activities to be undertaken in advance of marking;
3. the activities to be undertaken during the marking process;
4. the activities to be undertaken subsequent to marking; and
5. the information needed to support external examining.

The Policy sets out the minimum activities required to be carried out on all taught modules and programmes. While the Policy applies to all taught modules, it seeks to ensure that a proportionate approach is taken where appropriate. Thus, it specifies the two situations where a more proportionate approach can be taken, these being 1) level 4 (and below) modules that do not contribute to award classifications, and 2) assessments that contribute 10% or less to a module's outcome.

### Institutional oversight

This Policy has been endorsed by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) in October 2023 and approved by Senate in November 2023. It will be kept under regular review to ensure it continues both to support internal processes that function efficiently and effectively.

### Associated regulations, policies, and procedures.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- [The Strategic Approach to the Enhancement of Assessment and Feedback for 2023-2027](#)
- [Senate Regulations for Modular Taught Programmes](#)
- [Assessment and Examining Board Regulations](#)
- [External Examiners Policy \(Taught Programmes\)](#)

### Exclusions

The Marking & Moderation policy does not apply to Research Degrees.

### Professional, statutory, and regulatory body requirements.

The University recognises that some programmes have specific requirements set by professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies (PSRB). Where specific PSRB requirements impact on the implementation of the principles of this Policy, an exemption will be required from the Chair of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee.

## External Reference Points

The principles within this Policy have been mapped against the expectations and core and common practices of the [UK Quality Code](#), with those most relevant listed below.

Expectations for standards	Expectations for quality
The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant <a href="#">national qualifications' frameworks</a> .	Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector recognised standards.	From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
Core practices for standards	Core practices for quality
The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks.	The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.
The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.	The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.	The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.
	The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.
	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.
	The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.
<b>Common practices for standards</b>	<b>Common practices for quality</b>
The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.	The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.
	The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.
	The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance, and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

## Marking and Moderation Policy

### 1. Information to support marking and moderation.

- 1.1 All Schools / Programmes will have generic assessment criteria that provide an indication of the standards expected at different levels and grade points. These will be made available to students at the start of the academic year.

For Undergraduate awards, Schools will have descriptors at levels 4,5, and 6 for each of the below marking bands.

- Fail – 0-29%
- Marginal fail – 30-39%
- Third-class honours (3rd) – 40-49%
- Lower second-class honours (2.2) – 50-59%
- Upper second-class honours (2.1) – 60-69%
- First-class honours (1st) – 70-79%
- High first-class work (1st) – 80%+

For Integrated Master and Taught Postgraduate awards, Schools will have descriptors at levels 7 and 8 for each of the below marking bands.

- Fail – 0-39%
- Marginal fail – 40-49%
- Pass – 50-59%
- Merit – 60-69%
- Distinction – 70-79%
- High distinction – 80%+

To support these, module leaders will:

- 1.2 For objective assessments: Develop a detailed marking scheme to illustrate how marks will be awarded on individual questions. Marking schemes will be made available to students in advance of assessments.

and:

- 1.3 For subjective assessments EITHER:
- Develop task specific criteria and/or a rubric for that assessment, aligned to the School / Programme generic criteria, providing this to students in advance of that assessment as the framework that will be used to award marks.
- OR
- Provide students in advance of assessments with specific information to illustrate and/or explain how the School / Programme generic assessment criteria will be applied to support marking in that assessment.

1.4 Schools will ensure that all students are made aware of the need to record the assessment's length on coversheets and to submit coursework that adheres to the stated limits (e.g. word length / time etc.).

1.5 Schools will ensure that all students are made aware of the requirement to submit coursework by the stated deadline.

1.6 As outlined in the [External Examiner Policy](#), the marking and moderation schedule will be confirmed in consultation with each External Examiner at the start of each academic session, to ensure that markers, moderators, and External Examiners have sufficient time to undertake their responsibilities.

## **2. For ALL summative assessments in advance of initial marking**

### **Team and/or individual marking**

2.1 Chairs of Boards of Studies will determine whether specific assessments will be marked by an individual, or by a team of markers. This decision will be guided by the need to ensure that sufficient staff are involved in the marking of individual assessments to allow marks and feedback comments to be returned to students promptly, in line with the Academic Feedback Policy.

2.2 Heads of Schools will ensure that staff are appropriately trained and skilled to utilise the relevant digital tools and systems used to mark specific assessments and manage marks.

### **Anonymity in marking**

2.3 All marking will be undertaken anonymously (i.e., by student number or paper ID), unless the assessment format dictates otherwise, or where the assessment has been designed consciously to allow students' identities to be known.

2.4 Chairs of Boards of Studies will ensure that assessments in which anonymity cannot be maintained (e.g., dissertations / other extended projects) are first marked by someone else other than the project supervisor, wherever possible.

## Preparing for marking

2.5 In advance of marking coursework assessments where team marking operates:  
Module leaders will put in place and participate in appropriate social moderation activities to help the team develop a better shared understanding of the standards they expect to see in student work.

2.6 In advance of marking coursework assessments where individual marking operates:  
Individual markers will participate in appropriate activities with the moderator(s) for that assessment to help develop a better shared understanding of the standards they expect to see in student work. (Part of the purpose of this being to ensure the application of standards is consistent across levels and not just within the marking of a single module.)

[A selection of the tools and techniques that can be used to create a better shared understanding of the standards in student work at different levels can be found in the [Education Development Toolkit](#).

## 3. Undertaking marking

3.1 Markers will make it clear through the learning outcomes and assessment criteria where assessments require students to be concise and adhere to specified limits and, where appropriate, shall utilise these criteria to award lower marks to overlength submissions [See also 1.4].

3.2 All markers will follow the [Reasonable Adjustments Policy and Procedure](#) when managing assessments submitted by students who have confirmed disability related writing difficulties or other specific learning difficulties.

3.3 Wherever possible, any coursework assessments submitted during the resit period and/or subsequently will be marked by the same individuals and/or team as the original submissions.

3.4 Students may occasionally submit exam scripts that are not legible. In cases where two markers find a substantial part of an examination script to be illegible, Schools will, where possible, have the script transcribed. Schools may charge students for this service. Where this is not possible, students will normally be offered the opportunity to rewrite the exam script to ensure it is legible and can be marked. Students will be informed that the object of the above is only to transcribe the existing script and that the addition or omission of any material will constitute academic misconduct.



## 4. Undertaking moderation

4.1 Schools will ensure that appropriate moderation takes place on all assessments that contribute to degree classifications within taught programmes (i.e., assessments at levels 5, 6, and 7), where these contribute more than 10% to the module's final mark.

As a minimum this will include:

- For objective assessments – By checking and verifying the marks on a sample of scripts (paying particular attention to the ways in which marks were awarded on questions that carry more than one mark).
- For subjective assessments – By marker and moderator discussing, reviewing, and seeking agreement on the marks to be awarded to a sample of submissions.
- Normally, as a minimum, samples will constitute the greater of (1) 10 submissions, or (2) the square root of submissions (e.g., 12 sampled from 144 submissions).

[Please see the guidance in the linked appendices for further information on different moderation techniques e.g., where some limited double marking may help, ways of managing moderation, moderation on modules with low student numbers, moderation of extended projects first marked by supervisors etc.].

4.2. Schools will ensure that appropriate moderation takes place on all assessments that contribute to degree classifications within taught programmes (i.e., assessments at levels 5, 6, and 7), where these contribute 10% or less to the module's final mark.

As a minimum this will include:

- For objective assessments – By checking and verifying the marks on all scripts that do not meet the threshold pass mark.
- For subjective assessments – By marker and moderator discussing, reviewing, and seeking agreement on the marks of any submissions marked as being close to the pass mark (e.g., on undergraduate programmes, anything with a mark between 35 and 42, and on taught postgraduate programmes, anything with a mark between 45 and 52).

4.3 Schools will ensure that appropriate moderation takes place on all assessments at level 4 and below within taught programmes that have not met, or have just reached, the threshold pass mark.

As a minimum this will include:

- For objective assessments – By checking and verifying the marks on all scripts that do not meet the threshold pass mark.

- For subjective assessments – By marker and moderator discussing, reviewing, and agreeing the marks on any submissions marked as being close to the pass mark (i.e. on undergraduate programmes, anything with a mark between 35 and 42)

4.4 In assessments that have been marked by more than one marker, the moderation sample will include work marked by all of the markers in that team (whether the moderation focuses on the marking of different questions and/or on different scripts).

## Managing moderation

4.5 Schools will record the details of and outcomes from discussions between markers and moderators on standard digital pro-forma, which will be made available to external examiners.

4.6 Schools will manage the outcomes from moderation exercises in one of the following ways:

- Where the provisional marks are agreed to be consistent, reliable, and appropriate - the agreed provisional marks can be processed and passed to the Examining Board(s);
- Where the marks awarded to a specific sample of questions / submissions are identified as in need of adjustment - the module leader / lead marker and moderator will:
  - meet to identify and record (using the agreed pro-forma) the adjustments that need to be made to marks, recording the reasons for these.
  - arrange to make the changes required (whether this will require the re-marking of specific questions, scripts, and/or an adjustment to the marks on a selection of scripts).
  - make the required changes.
  - determine and confirm that the adjustments made have not unfairly disadvantaged individual students and have produced marks that are consistent, reliable, and appropriate.
  - pass the agreed provisional marks on to be processed and passed to the Examining Board(s).
- Where any changes to marks awarded to the scripts cannot be agreed by the first / lead marker and moderator – e.g., in cases where the marker(s) and moderator cannot agree that the provisional marks are consistent, reliable, and appropriate; a third marker will be appointed by the Examining Board Chair, to support and sign off on any changes required to marks, following the process above.

4.7 In the event that a module leader and moderator recommend to the Chair of an Examining Board that 'scaling' is required (i.e., to adjust an assessment or module marks across the cohort), then the Chair of the Examining Board will follow the [University's Scaling Guidance](#).

## 5. Marking, moderation, and external examining

### 5.1 External Examiners will be given access to:

- All summative assessments that contribute to award outcomes for all modules taught in the academic year under review - not just a snapshot of modules, as student performance should be reviewed within and between cohorts across time.
- The provisional marks within all of these modules, to enable External Examiners to review assessments that contribute to award outcomes.
- The completed proformas used to record evidence of the full marking and moderation process and the outcomes of any discussions between marker(s) and moderators.

Full information about any scaling that has taken place, clearly recording the outcomes from this and reasons for any changes to marks that have been made.

5.2. Marks will be ratified at an Examining Board when work has a) been made available to an External Examiner, and b) that [at least] a sample of that work has been reviewed by the External Examiner.

Further information and guidance to support the implementation of this Policy can be found by visiting the Education Development Service (EDS) Toolkit using the instructions below.

1. Access the EDS Toolkit link:

<https://sites.cardiff.ac.uk/education-development-toolkit/>

2. Login using your University username and password; university email accounts will not work.
3. Use the search bar in the bottom right to search '**Marking and Moderation**' and select the **top result**.