

BMTO Teaching Network- 10.10.2018

"Marking criteria, grade descriptors, rubrics... what do we want from them?" by Dr Michael Daw (CDBS)

Motivation: BMS has a uniquely narrow grade distribution within the university with a very high proportion of A3/B grades. External examiners often comment that we do not use the full range of marks.

Discussion points included:

1. Holistic vs analytic marking. Analytic (defines marks for specific elements of a piece of work) schemes probably offer more consistency but make it hard to reward excellence in any one domain.
2. Generic vs task specific grade descriptors. Generic allow consistency across assignments and courses but probably lower consistency between markers due to less specific guidance especially outside of generic essay-type assignments. Most agreed that task-specific are more effective.
3. Should the descriptors be designed as student guidance? This is essentially an extreme version of task-specific descriptors. Whilst some like this idea as it increases student understanding others were concerned that this sort of spoon-feeding causes criteria compliance that decreases independent thinking and working. The possibility of decreasing the specificity across years was discussed.
4. How do we ensure that the mark and feedback are linked to the supplied criteria? Feedback for markers or marking at least a subset of assignments in groups was discussed.