**BMTO Undergraduate Moderation Guidance**

# Purpose of the Guidance

Moderation of marking is a requirement for all assessed work but can take many forms. This document is for guidance only and suggests ways in which you may wish to carry out moderation

The guidance is in line with the University of Edinburgh’s Taught Assessment Regulation (TAR ) 31.7

[(https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf)](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf)

Further guidance is available here: [https://www.ed.ac.uk/instituteacademic-development/learning-teaching/staff/assessment/moderation-guidance](https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/assessment/moderation-guidance)

# Moderation

Moderation is a process separate from the marking of assessments. Moderation ensures that an assessment outcome (mark and /or grade) is fair, valid and reliable, that assessment criteria have been applied consistently, and that any differences in academic judgement between individual markers can be acknowledged and addressed.

The marking of all components of assessment must be subject to moderation in a way that is appropriate to the discipline, the nature of the assessment, and the credit weighting of the component of assessment.

Moderators cannot moderate their own marking. Where markers for an assessment also act as moderators, at least two moderators should be used so that each individual can moderate the other’s marking.

No changes should be made to marking without the original marker’s knowledge. Where possible, any changes should take place in discussion with the original marker. As well as ensuring that the marker’s opinion is properly understood and considered, this will also act as an important development process for markers by helping to establish common standards.

All adjustment to marks must be made before marks and feedback are returned to students therefore initial marking deadlines take account of the time needed for moderation before the feedback deadline.

# Forms of Moderation

## Single Marking Sampled Moderation

For most assessments, sampling is the most appropriate method of moderation; it addresses the common challenges associated with marking (alignment of mark with marking criteria and feedback, subjective differences between markers) without needing the extra time or staff resources associated with double-marking. In this form of moderation, a sample of marked assignments from each individual marker is moderated. Moderators should assess a range of factors:

* Is the marker’s feedback detailed enough to let the students know what they have done well and how they can improve their performance in future assessment?
* Does the feedback justify the mark according to the marking scheme?
* Is the feedback and mark an accurate assessment of the student’s work according to the marking scheme?

A minimum sample size of five individual assignments or 10% of the total assignments marked by each marker is recommended, whichever number is larger. Please note that this means that sampling is not appropriate in assessments where each marker marks five or fewer individual assignments. The sample should include a range of examples of each grade. Reviewing the mark distribution from each marker can also be used to select which samples to moderate e.g.: if one marker has not awarded any A grades, it would be useful to sample assignments given high B grades by that marker to assess whether a higher mark would be more appropriate. All assignments given a fail grade should be moderated.

If any issues, such as inadequate feedback or inappropriate mark, are identified, these should be discussed with the marker(s) concerned. If required, adjustments to marks or feedback should be done at a marker level not the level of a single sample assignment. e.g.: all assignments by an individual marker or all assignments in a specific mark range should be reassessed by the original marker taking in to account the feedback from moderators.

## 3.2 Double Marking

Double marking is only required for individual assessment carrying at least 40 credits (this does not apply to any current BMTO UG assessments), but may be used in other circumstances such as individual high value assessments (e.g.: Y4 project reports) or assessments that require marking by two markers with different expertise. Double Marking involves two markers, the first marker (or team of first markers) and the second marker (or team of second markers) marking all students’ work. Where there are teams of markers each marking multiple assignments, each second marker should second mark assignments marked by a range of first markers.

There are two types of double-marking: Blind Double Marking, and Non-Blind Double Marking.

**Blind Double Marking**: The first marker and second marker independently mark all students’ work. Marks and feedback from the first marker are not available to the second marker, and vice versa. This form of marking is used for Y4 project reports in most programmes (dissertations).

Marks from the two markersare averaged to reach a single final mark as long as there is a difference of 5% or less between the two marks. If the difference in marks is greater than 5% the two markers should discuss the mark and decide on a single final agreed mark. In this case, care should be taken to ensure that all feedback received by the student matches the final mark decided on. One or both markers may need to alter their feedback in light of the discussion between markers.

Double marking itself is considered a form of moderation; no further moderation is required unless first and second markers cannot agree on a final mark.

**Non-Blind Double Marking**: A first marker (or team of first markers) marks the assessment and produces feedback. The assessment, first marker’s mark and feedback is then passed to the second marker (or team of second markers) for marking and feedback. This approach may be especially useful where the first marker, but not the second marker, is a subject expert. If the second marker agrees that the first marker’s mark is appropriate to within 5%, then the first marker’s mark is used. If not, the first marker and second marker will discuss the assessment and try to reach a consensus decision regarding the mark, using the same options available for Blind Double Marking.

**Note on 5% marking discrepancy:** A Deanery-wide decision was taken for markers to discuss any mark where double markers have > 5% discrepancy. This decision was based on feedback from multiple external examiners. Different levels of discrepancy are used in other areas of the university.

**Double Marking Moderation:** When the first and second markers are unable to agree on a final mark, a third (non-blind) marker will be used as a moderator. The work is passed to the moderator (third marker) who marks the assessment with the first and second markers feedback and marks available to review. The moderator takes into account all available information (the assessment, the two marking records (including the markers’ feedback), and the agreed marking record if available) and comes up with a moderated mark, which is recorded on a marking form. This third marker has the final decision on the student mark.

# Records of Moderation

All moderation and assessment mark changes must be recorded and sent to the Course Administrator with the finalised set of provisional marks for each moderated assessment. A record template is included in the appendix. Records must show what decisions were made (including where marks are not altered) and why decisions have been taken.

# Moderation of Multiple Choice Assessments

Multiple choice exam questions should be moderated by carrying out quality assurance checks. A discipline expert should check that all questions, answers and explanations adequately assess learning outcomes, are correct and are non-ambiguous. After questions have appeared in an exam paper, item analysis should be used to validate how questions have performed. Item analysis involves reviewing the distribution of answers given by students for each question. This data is available for both online exams run through Blackboard and in-person exams that are machine-marked. The results from item analysis will allow ambiguous or misleading questions to be eliminated, or for improvements to made to questions for use in later assessments.

# Good Practice

* Where marks have been adjusted by moderation, moderators must ensure that feedback is still consistent with the mark.
* Marking schemes must be made available to all students at the start of each course and programme.
* Marker packs should be provided to all markers and moderators. Packs will include marking schemes; assessment guidance supplied to students; marking guidelines and records; and moderation guidelines and records.
* Records of all marking and moderation must be kept up to date and retained on file.

**Appendix**

**Assessment moderation record**

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| **Programme** |  |
| **Course** |  |
| **Academic Year** |  |
| **Assessment** |  |
| **Marker(s)** |  |
| **Moderator(s)** |  |
| **Moderation process** |
| **Feedback for markers** |