

6D - Marking, Independent Marking and Moderation: Policy and Procedure

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1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1.1 This policy and procedure is intended for Bournemouth University (BU) staff and BU appointed external examiners.

1.2 The main purpose of assessment is to measure student achievement by competent and impartial assessors. This policy and procedure outlines the principles and arrangements the University applies to marking, independent marking and moderation of assessed students' work on taught programmes of study.

2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 **Senate:** to approve new policies or amendments to existing policies relating to marking, independent marking and moderation.

2.2 **Education Committee:** to periodically review the effectiveness of the arrangements for marking, independent marking and moderation and recommend changes to current policy to Senate. To approve new and revised procedures by exception.

2.3 **Faculty Education Committee:** to ensure that all programmes operate in accordance with the University's requirements for independent marking and report on the effectiveness of these arrangements to Education Committee.

2.4 **BU staff and BU appointed external examiners:** to carry out their designated roles in accordance with the University's requirements.

3. ACCESSING TO OTHER RELEVANT BU DOCUMENTS

3.1 All documents can be accessed [here](#)

3.2 This policy and procedure has direct links to the following documents:

- *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations:*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Undergraduate Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Postgraduate Taught Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Foundation Degree Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Higher National Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Integrated Masters Programmes*
- *6C - Principles of Assessment Design: Policy*
- *6E - Assessment Feedback and Return of Assessed Work: Procedure*
- *6F - Generic Assessment Criteria: Procedure*
- *6H - Academic Offences: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards*
- *6K - Assessment Boards: Policy*
- *6L - Assessment Board Decision-Making, Including the Implementation of Assessment Regulations: Procedure*
- *6N - External Examining: Policy and Procedure*
- *6P - External Examiner's Handbook*

Policy

4. PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS

4.1 **Marking**

4.1.1 Marking provides a measure of student performance which enables internal assessors to confirm whether the individual student has achieved the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) and reflects how well they have performed against the assessment criteria. Marking is carried out by one or more internal markers for all summatively assessed students' work and may be carried out for formative assessments.

4.1.2 In large cohorts there may be a number of internal assessors who act as first markers. Where this is the case, marking of the same assessment task by more than one first marker has implications for marking, independent marking, and moderation by external examiners.

4.1.3 All marking activities must be carried out by suitably qualified staff. Academic staff who are new to higher education should not carry out independent marking before they have undergone appropriate staff development and support and gained sufficient marking experience. For example, a higher proportion of assessed work may need to be independently marked where a new staff member is the first marker. Where students are assessed in a work-place or in practice, the University requires that work and practice-based assessors who act as first markers are suitably qualified. Where these assessors act as first markers, the University requires that independent marking is carried out by academic staff members. Work or practice-based assessors should not act as independent markers.

4.2 **Anonymous and independent marking**

4.2.1 Bournemouth University applies the principles of anonymous marking for summative assessments, wherever this is pedagogically and practically reasonable. This means that markers will not be made aware of an individual student's identity at the time of marking.

4.2.2 Although it is not always possible to allow full anonymity in all types of assessment, the default position is that work submitted through the normal submission procedures will be marked

anonymously. Examples of cases where it may not be pedagogically or practically reasonable would typically include:

- practical assessment
- presentations
- supervised projects/dissertations
- where an assessment is related to a previous submission or assessed activity

In addition, there is no expectation that formative assessment or group work is anonymised.

4.2.3 Individual circumstances might mean that assessed work is not anonymously marked; for example, applications for exceptional circumstances, an extension request, where academic offences are suspected or where support from Additional Learning Support (ALS) is accessed.

4.2.4 In order to ensure fairness to all students, and that academic standards are consistently and rigorously maintained at programme team level, summatively assessed students' work must be independently marked. **Independent marking** describes a process whereby summative assessments are either subject to:

- **Second marking** – this requires the independent marker to mark **with** prior knowledge of the first marker's comments and the mark awarded;
- **Double marking** – this involves two internal markers who 'blind' mark independently of each other against the assessment criteria.

4.2.5 Second marking will normally incorporate a checking process referred to herein as **internal moderation**. As well as arriving at a mark, internal moderation requires the independent marker to confirm proper application of the assessment processes across the sample size for the assessment task. In instances where double marking is used as an alternative to second marking of coursework or examinations, double marking will also involve an aspect of internal moderation.

4.2.6 The processes for second and double marking, including the minimum sample sizes and the requirements for teams to maintain an audit trail of independent marking are outlined in the University's **Independent Marking Procedure** ¹.

4.3 **Moderation by external examiners**

4.3.1 In addition to independent marking, summatively assessed students' work is subject to a process of **moderation by external examiners** who review the proper application of the assessment processes and criteria. This allows external examiners to confirm whether the students have fulfilled the learning outcomes of the programme and to make judgements on internal consistency and external comparability of standards of the University's awards.

4.3.2 External moderation addresses marking standards across a group or cohort and makes judgments of broad comparisons between units within a programme and across programmes in the same subject area between institutions. External moderation also allows for comparisons between successive intakes and, where appropriate, multiple centres of delivery. External moderation may include the consideration of quantitative data on marks (if requested).

4.3.3 External moderation is undertaken on the basis of sampling of assessed work which has been independently marked. The nature and sample size of work to be provided during the academic year is agreed between the programme team and the external examiner(s).

4.4 **Adjustment of marks**

4.4.1 Moderation by external examiners may result in a recommendation for the **adjustment of marks** by a Unit Board if all students are judged to have been unduly advantaged or disadvantaged equally by shortcomings in the assessment process.

¹ For final year dissertations and projects the sample size is 100%.

4.5 **Moderation by link tutors**

- 4.5.1 Moderation may also be carried out by link tutors (or their nominee) following the principles outlined in Section 4.3 above whereby the sample size is drawn from work which has been independently marked in accordance with the University's requirements. Moderation by link tutors may require adjustment of marks by the internal markers but does not result in a recommendation for the adjustment of marks by the Unit Board.

4.6 **Faculty and University overview**

- 4.6.1 The Faculty Education Committee maintains an overview of the Faculty's independent marking arrangements to ensure that all programmes operate in accordance with the University's requirements.

Procedure

5. MARKING

5.1 **Marking scale**

- 5.1.1 The University applies a pass mark of 40% to undergraduate provision and 50% to postgraduate provision as outlined in the *Standard Assessment Regulations*. Summative assessments are normally marked out of 100 but assessments may also be marked on a pass-fail basis where specified in the Programme Specification.
- 5.1.2 Where a higher pass mark for a unit or a formal element of assessment has been exceptionally approved due to professional body requirements, this will be specified in the Programme Specification. Normally a higher pass mark is translated into a pass-fail to avoid grade inflation.

5.2 **Principles on the rounding of marks**

- 5.2.1 All marking should be carried out, where possible, to a whole number. Where rounding of marks may necessarily take place when the overall mark arrived at is not a full number (e.g. due to the use of assessment weightings or automated assessment packages), marking may be carried out to an accuracy of two decimal points. The marks should be recorded on this basis.

5.3 **Assessment criteria**

- 5.3.1 Assessment criteria are used in all summative assessments to evaluate students' work against agreed statements of performance. Unit tutors may choose to write specific assessment criteria for their unit or they may choose to use the University generic assessment criteria which offer a consistent vocabulary for the description of student performance criteria (see *6F - Generic Assessment Criteria: Procedure*). The generic assessment criteria are primarily intended for use in the assessment of written assignments or examinations and will need to be appropriately adapted for the assessment of, for example, fieldwork, student presentations and laboratory work.
- 5.3.2 Unit tutors should ensure the assessment criteria that will be used for marking the work are available to the students when the assessment brief is set. Additionally, all first markers for a particular assessment task should ensure they are using the same assessment criteria when reaching their judgements and marks. Where more than one first marker is involved, initial calibration may need to take place to help ensure alignment of marking standards between the first markers before first marking of the entire set of work takes place. The same principle applies where there are several independent markers.
- 5.3.3 Formative assessments may be marked as described above or may be considered by the unit tutor in order to provide qualitative feedback on students' performance before summative assessments take place without issuing actual marks.

5.4 ***Independent Marking Plans and allocation of markers***

- 5.4.1 Depending upon the approach chosen by the Faculty, the programme team must draw up an Independent Marking Plan (IMP) based on the agreed assignment schedule either annually at the beginning of the academic year or prior to each Semester. Faculties may also take a mixed approach to managing this. However any units which run across the Semesters (e.g. long and thin) must be included on the IMP produced at the beginning of the academic year for the programme. The IMP identifies all summative assessment and should be used by programme teams to ensure coherence of the overall assessment strategy.
- 5.4.2 An IMP template is prepared by the SITS Support and Development team and the Academic Quality team and circulated by Academic Quality prior to the start of the academic year. The template includes pre-populated SITS information and stipulates the information which should be recorded. For partner provision, the IMP should also identify University moderators (normally the link tutor).

NB: When determining assessment submission dates for hard-copy submissions, the IMP should take into account the Late Submission '72 hour rule' so the original deadline and the 72 hour deadline can be managed within the working week.

- 5.4.3 When first and independent markers are allocated, or when the sample size for independent marking is set, these should be done with reference to the requirements set out in Sections 4.1-4.2 above to ensure an appropriate balance of expertise amongst the assessment team. **Where more than one first marker or several independent markers are allocated for an assessment task, a lead person should be identified to ensure overview of the marking arrangements.** Postgraduate Research Students (PGRs) may act as first markers but would not normally be expected to act as independent markers. Where several first markers are allocated, the independent marker(s) must be exposed to work marked by all first markers in order to determine that all first markers have approached the task consistently unless addressed through other means such as an internal moderation panel.
- 5.4.4 All IMPs are overseen by the FASEC. Partner IMPs should also be submitted to the HE Co-ordinator (or equivalent) for review prior to submission to the link tutor for approval. Faculties inform partners annually of the required submission date to the University.
- 5.4.5 The IMP must be made available to the Unit and Programme Boards for confirmation that it has been implemented in accordance with the University's requirements.

5.5 ***Independent marking audit trail***

- 5.5.1 All programme teams must maintain an audit trail of independent marking. **It is important to ensure that the audit trail, including the sample that is sent to the external examiner, clearly demonstrates that independent marking has taken place, even where it has not resulted in a change of marks.** An Independent Marking Sheet template is included in Appendix 1a & 1b and includes all the information that is required.

5.6 ***Collection of coursework and examination papers for marking***

- 5.6.1 Submitted coursework can be collected for marking from the relevant administrator within the Faculty or, for online submissions, viewed or downloaded via the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).
- 5.6.2 Examination papers should normally be collected for marking from the Examinations Office, Talbot Campus, (or other location as notified), as soon as possible after the examination has taken place. Staff collecting papers will be required to sign for them to ensure a transparent audit trail. Papers cannot be collected from the examination room/hall over the main examination periods. However, papers for examinations taken outside of main examination periods may be collected directly from the examination room/hall after the examination has come to an end.
- 5.6.3 Partners should ensure a suitable procedure is in place for the collection of coursework and examination papers for marking.

5.7 **Additional Learning Support (ALS)**

- 5.7.1 Where a student is in receipt of Additional Learning Support, their summatively assessed work may need to be marked in accordance with the Student Services Additional Learning Support Marking Guidelines. Such work requiring special consideration under the guidelines will be identified through the use of clearly marked stickers displayed on assessments. These are issued by invigilators for examination papers on the day of the examination and by programme support staff or ALS on submission of written assignments. For online submission, students must include the term '**ALS Marking Guidelines**' in the header of their document.

5.8 **Academic Offences**

- 5.8.1 When first or independent markers suspect that an academic offence may have been committed, a preliminary meeting should be convened as outlined in *6H - Academic Offences: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards*. **The mark and the work should not be released to the student until the suspected academic offence is resolved.**

5.9 **Assessment feedback service standard**

- 5.9.1 All written assignments (with the exception of dissertations/projects) must be marked and returned to students within three weeks from the submission date in accordance with the University's three-week service standard for assessment feedback. Examination papers must also be marked within three weeks from the examination date although these are not routinely returned to students. **Mid-year examinations may follow a four week assessment turnaround service.** If the assessment turnaround period runs into a student vacation, the students' work must be returned during the first week of the subsequent term.

- 5.9.2 Where a different service standard (normally up to four weeks) has been exceptionally agreed, this must be specified in writing to students before assessments take place to help manage student expectations. Large cohort sizes are not sufficient condition for a lower service standard and appropriate resources must be brought to bear so the marking process can be completed in time. Where an unexpected delay to the service standard is unavoidable, students must be informed in writing of the delay, and/or the revised return date.

- 5.9.3 Faculties and partners need to maintain local procedures which facilitate the return of assessed work to students within the agreed service standard. This normally requires that students receive feedback within three weeks of the submission/examination date (unless a longer time period is stipulated e.g. 4 weeks) and the first and independent markers are expected to plan their marking activities and agree a schedule for the marking of summative assessments accordingly. For programmes delivered by a partner, an additional layer of moderation by the University link tutor or nominee may be required which should be taken into account when marking activities are planned.

- 5.9.4 Feedback on formative assessments does not come under the three-week service standard but feedback is normally expected to help prepare students for the related summative assessment(s).

5.10 **Assessment deadlines and marking**

Coursework submitted on time and after the deadline should be marked as outlined in this section. The '72 hour rule' referred to below only applies to the submission of written coursework and artefacts and only applies to first attempts including any subsequent attempt taken as a first attempt due to mitigation. It does not apply to reassessments.

For further ruling and information relating to the '72 hour rule' and non-submissions please refer to section 9 of *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations* and section 6.6 of *6L - Assessment Board Decision-Making, Including the Implementation of Assessment Regulations: Procedure*.

5.10.1 **Coursework submitted on time or within 72 hours of the deadline**

- a) The work must be marked and feedback provided as per *6E - Assessment Feedback and Return of assessed work: Policy and Procedure*;

- b) Final mark sheets are provided to the Programme Support Officer for recording in the student records system;
- c) For work submitted within 72 hours of the deadline (referred to as Late Submissions), the maximum mark that can be awarded for the piece of work will be the capped mark, although the mark the student would have received had they submitted on time should be included (and be provided to the Programme Support Officer to retain for Programme Board consideration in case a student submits exceptional circumstances for Board consideration);
- d) For sub-elements submitted within 72 hours of the deadline - the capped mark awarded will be included in the aggregate formal element mark calculation.

5.10.2 **Coursework submitted after 72 hours of the deadline**

- a) Work submitted after 72 hours of the deadline will be recorded as a Non-Submission (NS) and a mark of zero (0%) will be given. For sub-elements, the mark of zero (0%) will be included in the aggregate formal mark calculation;
- b) Final mark sheets are provided to the Programme Support Officer for recording in the student records system;
- c) Where work is submitted after 72 hours of the deadline but within three weeks, staff are advised to mark the work and provide feedback to students, although the mark the student would have received had they submitted on time should be included (and be provided to the Programme Support Officer to retain for Programme Board consideration in case a student submits exceptional circumstances for Board consideration);
- d) Staff are not required to mark work submitted more than three weeks after the deadline but may choose to provide feedback (but no mark) to the student if the piece of work informs a subsequent submission.

5.10.3 **Reassessments submitted after the deadline**

The '72 hour rule' does not apply to reassessments. Staff are not required to mark reassessments submitted after the agreed deadline unless there are valid exceptional circumstances, but may choose to provide feedback (but no mark) to help inform future learning.

5.10.4 **Assessments in repeat mode**

The '72 hour rule' also applies to the first attempt in repeat mode or any subsequent attempt taken as a first attempt in repeat mode due to mitigation. The work should be capped and marked in accordance with section 5.10.1.

However, where a further resubmission in repeat mode is late (a second attempt in repeat mode) unless there are valid exceptional circumstances, staff are not required to mark the work or provide feedback.

5.11 **Publication of marks**

- 5.11.1 **For all assessments that are independently marked only the agreed mark should be provided to students.** Students should be made aware that no mark (for coursework or examination) is final until approved by the Assessment Boards and therefore may be subject to change. Students should be given an opportunity to discuss their assessed work with the marker(s). *6E - Assessment Feedback and Return of Assessed Work: Procedure* provides further information regarding the return of summatively assessed work and assessment feedback for students.

6. **INDEPENDENT MARKING PROCEDURE**

6.1 **Arrangements for independent marking**

- 6.1.1 Summatively assessed students' work, including reassessed work, must be independently marked to ensure maintenance of academic standards and fairness to all students. Independent marking (second marking or double marking) is carried out by suitably qualified and

experienced academic staff members in line with 6.2 and 6.3 below. New or inexperienced academics and work or practice assessors should not act as independent markers.

- 6.1.2 As independent marking is carried out on a sampling basis, all the marks awarded for the assessment task should be made available to the independent marker. The sampling requirements, including the standard sample size and any variations are outlined in Section 6.4 below.
- 6.1.3 Where more than one first marker or several independent markers are allocated for an assessment task, a lead person should be identified to ensure overview and consistency of the marking and independent marking arrangements. Similarly where several first markers have been allocated, the independent marker(s) must be exposed to work marked by all first markers in order to determine the correct application of the assessment criteria by each of them and to identify any differential trends between the first markers. There should be opportunities for discussion between the first marker(s) and the assessor(s) carrying out independent marking. Some programme teams may choose to address this through other means such as an internal moderation panel.
- 6.1.4 Faculties must ensure that all Independent Marking Plans are in line with the University's requirements for independent marking.
- 6.1.5 External examiners **must not** be used to resolve disagreements between internal markers or to assess individual students directly. Internal markers must agree all marks before work is sent to the external examiner for moderation.

6.2 **SECOND MARKING**

Process (also please refer to Section 6.1 above)

- 6.2.1 Second marking refers to a process which requires the first marker to record a mark and comments on the student's work/feedback form. The independent marker marks in awareness of the first mark and comments in order to arrive at a mark and to review the proper application of the assessment processes across the sample. This forms the basis of discussion between the markers. If there are no significant differences (e.g. a class difference or a difference of more than 5 marks within a class), the first marks for the whole set will be recorded as the agreed marks and the agreed feedback is recorded on the students' work/feedback forms. For online submissions, evidence of second marking must be demonstrated (e.g. for external examiners oversight that independent marking has occurred) but only one agreed mark and the agreed feedback made available to the student.
- 6.2.2 If a differential trend is identified throughout the sample (e.g. marking high or low), the first marker and the independent marker may agree to change all the marks in the set, in which case the revised marks are recorded as agreed marks. In this circumstance it may be appropriate for a further sample to be marked to test the consistency of the differential. If there is no pattern to the discrepancy, the whole set must be second marked. A note on the final collated marks sheet should state what has been done and why. Only the agreed marks and feedback must be recorded on the students' work/feedback forms.
- 6.2.3 If agreement is not reached, a third marker will be appointed by the Head of Department/Deputy Dean Education (or nominee). The third marker may mark with or without reference to the earlier marks and then discuss the marks with the first and independent marker as appropriate. Normally the third marker would be expected to stay within the bounds of the first two markers unless there is a good reason to award marks outside the boundaries already set. The third marker should arbitrate to reach mutually agreed marks. In exceptional circumstances where marks cannot be mutually agreed, the third marker's marks will stand. Details of the basis of the discussion and/or agreement on the final marks must be recorded on the final collated marks sheet for audit purposes².

² An Independent Marking Record Sheet template is provided in Appendix 1a & 1b.

- 6.2.4 Where several first markers have been allocated and if a differential trend is identified between them (e.g. one of the first markers has marked consistently high or low, compared to the other markers), the first marker in question and the independent marker(s) may agree to change all the marks for that particular marker only, in which case the revised marks are recorded as agreed marks and the other first markers' marks do not need to be changed. If there is no pattern to the discrepancy the whole set for that first marker must be second marked. A note on the final collated marks sheet should state what has been done and why. Only the agreed marks and feedback must be recorded on the students' work/feedback forms. If agreement is not reached, then the procedure detailed in Section 6.2.3 will apply.

Application

- 6.2.5 Second marking may be applied as an alternative to double marking. Second marking will normally involve sampling and therefore incorporate a checking process called internal moderation whereby as well as arriving at a mark, the independent marker(s) confirms that proper application of the assessment processes has been used by the first marker(s), for example: the quality of feedback and whether the marking criteria has been applied fairly and consistently. Where second marking is used as an alternative to double marking of final year dissertations and projects (or equivalent), this checking process of internal moderation would not normally take place. Where a mark for an individual dissertation or final year project (or equivalent assessment) needs to be adjudicated, a third marker should be brought in as outlined in 6.2.3 above.

6.3 DOUBLE MARKING

Process (also please refer to Section 6.1 above)

- 6.3.1 Double marking is a process that allows two markers to mark the student's work 'blind' (i.e. without sight of the other marker's mark). Each records a mark and comments. The markers may work in parallel or sequentially. In the latter case, marks and comments should be written on separate sheets and not disclosed until the markers discuss their marks. Through this discussion the markers will determine an agreed mark and feedback which should be recorded on the student's work/feedback form being returned to the student. When there are significant differences between their marks awarded to an individual student (e.g. a class difference, or a difference of more than 5 marks within a class), the markers record a separate justificatory comment for reaching the agreed mark. The original marks, the agreed mark and justificatory comments are recorded on the final collated marks sheet³ which will not be made available to the student.
- 6.3.2 If the two markers cannot reach an agreed mark on a student's work, a third marker will be appointed as outlined in Section 6.2.3 above.

Application

- 6.3.3 Double marking is normally applied to final year projects and dissertations (or equivalent) and to single pieces of assessment with a value equivalent to 40 credits or more.
- 6.3.4 Double marking may also be applied to examinations or coursework as an alternative to second marking. Where used in this manner, the double marking function will normally involve an aspect of the internal moderation checking process, whereby as well as arriving at a mark, it is confirmed that proper application of the assessment processes has been used which in this case may be to assure that an assessment outcome is fair and reliable and that the assessment criteria has been applied consistently.
- 6.3.5 Where double marking is used as an alternative to second marking and a differential trend is identified between two markers (e.g. marking high or low), the procedure detailed in Section 6.2.2 above will apply.
- 6.3.6 Where double marking is used as an alternative to second marking and several first markers have been allocated, the procedure detailed in Section 6.2.4 above will apply.

³ An Independent Marking Record Sheet template is provided in Appendix 1a & 1b.

6.4 ***Sampling for independent marking***

Standard sample size

6.4.1 The standard sample size for all double and second marking comprises a minimum of 15 assignments/scripts (or 50% if the total number of assignments/scripts is less than 30). However, for final year dissertations and projects the sample size is 100%. **The additional requirements for independent marking for assessments with more than one first marker are outlined in Section 6.1.3 above. All other variations to the standard sample size are outlined in Sections 6.4.2 - 6.4.9 below.**

6.4.2 When choosing the sample, particular emphasis should be placed on Firsts/Distinctions and fails:

- For failed work that contributes to the final award **all fails** should be included in the sample (e.g. Level 5, 6 and 7);
- For failed work not contributing to the final award a minimum sample of 5 pieces of work (or all fails if less than 5) should be included in the sample (i.e. Level 4).

6.4.3 The standard samples above should be seen as being the minimum required. For small cohorts it may be appropriate for the independent marker to include all scripts in the sample size. Other variations that involve a higher proportion of student work being independently marked or for more staff to be involved (for example, panel marking of project work) is encouraged.

Sample size for online assessments

6.4.4 The standard sample size applies to all online assessments. However the purpose of second marking of multiple choice questions/tests which utilise automated assessment packages is merely to confirm correct operation of the programme and to check for anomalies and trends.

Sample size for other non-written assessments

6.4.5 A sample (normally 25%) of oral presentations and other types of non-written work including interactive presentations (where an individual or a group engage in debate with a tutor) should normally be double marked, preferably at the same time. When a presentation is the only assessment for a unit, all presentations should be marked in this way. If both markers cannot attend a live assessment/presentation, the first marker should attend and the other marker must use a recording.

Sample size for group work

6.4.6 The sample size for group work may be smaller than the standard sample size depending on the nature of the assessment and the size of groups.

Sample size for dissertations, projects and equivalent pieces of assessment

6.4.7 All final year dissertations and projects contributing to the award classification at Levels 5, 6 and 7 must be 100% double or second marked (normally double marked). This requirement also applies to any single piece of assessment with a value equivalent to 40 credits or more. When a programme team decides on second marking, it should record the reasons for its decision in the relevant programme management team minutes where the IMP is discussed.

Sample size for reassessments

6.4.8 The sample size for independent marking of all reassessed work should be in accordance with Section 6.4 above.

6.5 ***Academic offences***

6.5.1 When an independent marker suspects that an academic offence may have been committed, they should alert the first marker who will arrange for a preliminary meeting as outlined in Section 5.8 above.

7. **MODERATION BY EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

7.1 **Sample size for moderation**

- 7.1.1 The purpose of moderation by external examiners is outlined in Section 4.3 above. To facilitate moderation at Level 4 (for Foundation degrees or programmes which terminate at Level 4, including the award of credit), 5, 6 and 7, a representative sample of independently marked students' work should be viewed by external examiners. Normally this requires access to the work of students proposed for the highest available category of the award and for failure, and a representative sample of the work of students proposed for each category of the award⁴.
- 7.1.2 Programme teams and the external examiner(s) should agree the sample of students' assessed work to be provided for moderation during the academic year. **The agreed sample must clearly identify the independent marking audit trail including evidence that work has been independently marked even where marks have not been changed.** Where the sample chosen for independent marking has included work marked by more than one first marker, the sample sent to the external examiner should reflect this and clearly identify the markers, e.g. by sending the external examiner a copy of the IMP or the final collated marks sheet (also see the standard Independent Marking Sheet template in Appendix 1a & 1b).
- 7.1.3 The selection of work should include written and non-written/live assessments, including artefacts, presentations, and online assessments. Where multiple choice questions, tests which utilise automated assessment packages, or live assessments (e.g. presentations) are **the sole method of assessment** for a unit, then external examiners must be provided with access to these (or a recording in the case of live assessments). External examiners may require larger samples or to be given access to all available summatively assessed work. They may also ask to receive statistical data, assessment criteria, model answers and marking schemes.
- 7.1.4 Assessed work submitted, marked and completed online should normally be made available electronically, unless otherwise requested by the external examiner. Academic Quality create the necessary accounts for each external examiner and provide initial guidance for navigating the University VLE. This enables external examiners to have access to assessments, feedback and marks, together with other online activities. Further information relating to the moderation of online assessments is included in *6P - External Examiner's Handbook*.

7.2 **Recommendations for the adjustment of marks**

- 7.2.1 Based on moderation, external examiners may recommend to the Unit Board adjustment of **whole sets of marks** awarded by internal markers if all students are judged to have been unduly advantaged or disadvantaged equally by shortcomings in the assessment process. It is not necessary for all work to be seen by the external examiner to confirm a trend but the size of the sample should be reasonable, based on the judgement of the external examiner. The external examiner may also request to see a larger sample size to confirm or alleviate their concern. Recommendations for the adjustment of marks should be recorded on the External Examiner Moderation Recommendation Report (see Appendix 2) in advance of the Assessment Board meeting and discussed fully at the Board. The Assessment Board should collectively consider the marks awarded by the programme team and the recommendation made by the external examiner in accordance with the guidance outlined in *6L - Assessment Board Decision-Making, Including the Implementation of Assessment Regulations: Procedure*.
- 7.2.2 Moderation by external examiners should not normally result in recommendations to change the **marks of individual students** unless all students' work for that assessment has been reviewed by the external examiner prior to individual marks being changed to ensure that no students would be unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged by the changes. This may involve scrutiny of all assessments or, in the case of several first markers, a set of assessments marked by the first marker whose marking has raised concern. However, if the external examiner identifies an apparent marking anomaly that is a clear marking error and not a trend issue, this should be brought to the attention of the internal markers so that the error can be rectified before the Assessment Boards take place.

⁴ Assessed work which relates to non-credit bearing programme elements such as placements is not sent to external examiners.

7.3 **Practical arrangements**

7.3.1 The practical arrangements for managing moderation are detailed in *6P - External Examiner's Handbook*.

8. **MODERATION BY LINK TUTORS**

8.1 For partner provision, an additional process of moderation of marks for examinations and coursework should be carried out, on a sampling basis, at all levels by a link tutor or by University colleagues as arranged by the link tutor. This additional function allows the University to review the independent marking and assessment processes applied by the partner but does not replace moderation carried out by external examiners. Normally moderation by link tutors is carried out after the process of independent marking has been completed by the partner. The sample for moderation is taken from independently marked student work that has been second or double marked by the partner, including the top, middle and bottom assessment ranges. The link tutor may recommend re-scaling of marks, as a result of such moderation. The agreed marks and rationale for any changes must be recorded on the final collated marks sheet.

8.2 Link tutor moderation is particularly important in the first two or three cycles of programme delivery. Thereafter the level of link tutor moderation may be reviewed by the programme team and the link tutor in the light of increasing experience of HE assessment in the team. When a decision is made to reduce levels of moderation, this should be clearly reflected in the relevant programme management team meeting minutes. All agreements in relation to the degree of moderation to be undertaken must be made at the start of each academic year⁵, and should be recorded on the IMP.

8.3 Link tutor moderation arrangements for partner provision should be included within the IMP to ensure that partners are aware from the beginning of the academic year whether and when moderation is due to happen. It is the Faculty's decision to determine the level of moderation required, based on a risk-based approach and their continued confidence in, e.g. the experience of the current programme team, the length of time the programme has been running for and positive student and external examiner feedback.

9. **RECORDING OF FORMAL ELEMENT MARKS IN THE STUDENT RECORD SYSTEM**

9.1 *6K - Assessment Boards: Policy* and associated procedural guidance outline the requirements and timescales for unit leaders to record and communicate marks to programme support officers. Unit leaders are responsible for ensuring that final collated mark sheets are fully completed, aggregated⁶, agreed, signed by first and independent markers and the marks calculated accurately. Unit tutors should also ensure that formal element marks are consistently recorded to an accuracy of two decimal points before they are provided to the Programme Support Officer for input into the student record system. Marks should be input into the student record system systematically as whole numbers or, if this is not possible, to an accuracy of two decimal points.

General

10. **REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION**

10.1 *UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018)*

10.2 ***Internal Frames of Reference***

⁵ CAS does not apply to Partner provision and therefore the degree of moderation to be undertaken must continue to be made at the start of each academic year

⁶ Any capping of marks for Late Submissions or Non-Submissions must take place and applied by the Unit Leader/nominee.

- *6C - Principles of Assessment Design: Policy* provides information on assessment design.
- *6E - Assessment Feedback and Return of Assessed Work: Policy and Procedure* provides further information regarding the return of summatively assessed work and assessment feedback for students.
- *6H - Academic Offences: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards* and *11D - Fitness to Practise Procedure* should be consulted as appropriate when an assessment offence is suspected (see Section 6.5 above).
- *6K - Assessment Boards: Policy* outlined the processes for the recording of marks (see Section 9.1 above).

10.3 This policy was reviewed according to the University's [Equality Analysis Procedure](#) in July 2019.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1a [UG Independent Marking Sheet template](#)

Appendix 1b [PG Independent Marking Sheet template](#)

Appendix 2 [External Examiner Moderation Recommendation Report template](#)