

**Guide to Standardisation and Moderation**

Updated October 2021

The University [Assessment Policy](http://www.worc.ac.uk/aqu/documents/AssessmentPolicy.pdf) provides the principles and processes that govern the design and management of student assessment within the University. The Policy should be your reference point in relation to the marking, standardisation and moderation of student work.

**Verification**

**What is verification?**

Verification is the process usedto ensure that the form and content of assessment tasks and briefs are appropriate, fair and valid in terms of reflecting the learning outcomes and presenting an appropriate level of challenge to students.

**When do I do verification?**

Assignment tasks and briefs should be verified **before being given to students**.

**How do I do verification?**

The verification of briefs should consider the consistency of the assignment task in relation to other modules at the same level in the same discipline, check that the learning outcomes will be fully addressed by the task and that the assessment criteria and grade descriptors reflect the learning outcomes and the level of the assessment.

Internally verified assessment items and related assessment criteria (together, where appropriate, with assessment briefs) to include all examination papers must be provided to the External Examiner for comment.

Course/subject teams must agree with External Examiners whether external scrutiny of assessment items and assessment criteria (including marking schemes/grids or model answers or similar) should take place before publication of assessment briefs to students, or alternatively may be carried out as part of the process of external moderation of student work.

**Verification checklist**

* All assessment tasks must be verified internally before being published to students.

**Standardisation**

**What is standardisation?**

Standardisation is the process usedto ensure that all members of the course or module teaching team are familiar with, and have a common understanding of, the marking standards and conventions in relation to the provision of feedback.

**When do I do standardisation?**

Whilst this list is not definitive, instances where standardisation might be recommended include: the introduction of new or revised assessment items, multiple markers for an assessment, a number of new or sessional markers, and the involvement of partner institutions or multiple delivery sites.

**How do I do standardisation?**

Standardisation is completed **in advance of marking** and involves a group of assessors all independently marking a sample of student work and assigning grades using agreed criteria.

Following individual grading, the team meets, discusses and agrees a grade, which serves as a benchmark for the module run. The meeting should also confirm and clarify other issues concerning marking and feedback, for example penalties for omitting key items. Arrangements for moderation and method and quality of feedback should also be discussed so that it is as consistent as possible.

Where the same assessment item has been used before, previously submitted work can be used for the standardisation activity. Where the assessment item is new, a sample from submitted work can be used. In this instance, the meeting will need to be arranged to take place shortly after submission. If possible, a range of quality of work should be used, with particular attention being paid to the boundary between a pass and a fail grade.

All members of the module marking team must be involved in the standardisation activity. Where members cannot attend a meeting, alternative means of communicating should be used. At the minimum, all members should grade the piece(s) of work and be informed of the result of the exercise prior to grading submitted work.

Where the assessment does not involve written work (e.g. presentations, OSCEs), film of previous assessment should be used. Where this is not available, other methods to ensure consistency of approach should be used.

**Standardisation checklist**

* Standardisation exercises must take place on an annual basis where modules are delivered across different sites and for large teaching teams
* Where there are new and/or multiple markers for a defined assessment, a standardisation exercise must be undertaken before marking begins to ensure consistency between markers
* A standardisation exercise must be undertaken for all items of summative assessment.
* The date of the standardisation exercise must be documented on the Internal Moderation Report Template and returned to the School’s Quality Administrator.
* External Examiners must be informed of the outcome of the standardisation exercise, and the pieces of work must be made available to them.

**Double Marking**

Double marking is the process by which a piece of work is marked by two assessors, who agree a final grade.

**What is blind double marking?**

Blind double marking is when two separate assessors each independently assess a piece of student work, assigning a grade and providing comments to justify the grades in relation to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Both examiners record their grades and comments separately, and then compare grades and resolve differences to produce an agreed grade and feedback.

**When do I do blind double marking?**

Blind double marking is normally carried out as a universal exercise, that is, every piece of student work is considered by two assessors. The University requires all Independent Studies/Projects and Dissertations of 30 credits or more to be blind double marked.

**What is non-blind double marking?**

Non-blind double marking is when an assessor grades a piece of student work, assigning a grade and providing comments to justify the grade, and then a second assessor also assigns a grade and provides comments, having seen the grades and comments of the first assessor. An agreed grade and feedback is provided for the student.

**When do I do non-blind double marking?**

Non-blind double marking is normally carried out as a universal exercise. Non-blind double marking should be used to confirm the pass/fail boundary, and may be appropriate in the case of new staff members, or in relation to new partners, or new and innovative assignments, or where as a result of initial moderation, a re-mark of the whole set of assignments is required.

**Double Marking checklist**

* Specific arrangements to double mark assessments, first marked by new inexperienced staff, must be in place
* All independent studies, projects and dissertations weighted 30 credits or more must be blind double marked
* All assessments falling into the pass/fail boundary (all grade E and a sample of grade D-) must be non-blind double marked
* Fails must be sampled through non-blind marking

**Moderation**

Moderation is the process to assure assessment criteria have been applied consistently and that assessment outcomes are fair and reliable. Modules must be moderated in accordance with the procedures set out in the [University Assessment Policy](https://www2.worc.ac.uk/aqu/documents/AssessmentPolicy.pdf). There are two kinds of moderation:

**Internal moderation**

**What is internal moderation?**

Internal moderation is undertaken by UW staff to demonstrate that the grades awarded are reliable and consistent. The purpose of internal moderationto ensure that academic standards are appropriate and consistent across course/subject teams and that feedback reflects agreed assessment policies and assessment criteria, and therefore the assessment outcomes for students are fair and reliable.

**How do I do internal moderation?**

A UW assessor marks the set of student assignments, providing a grade and comments to justify the grade, and a second UW assessor (the moderator) then reviews a sample of marked assignments (normally through blind or non-blind double marking) from across the grade profile. The moderator’s role is to confirm (or not) the grades awarded by the first marker, and the quality of the feedback, in the light of course/University protocols and expectations. An Internal Moderation Report must be complied for each module run and sent to the External Examiner

Moderation is normally undertaken using double marking of a sample of assessments in accordance with the University Assessment Policy; other methods of moderation are detailed in the policy.

Allocation of moderators can be undertaken in a variety of ways;

* Allocation in pairs, where markers moderate each other’s work
* Allocation where each marker has an identified moderator
* Random allocation where a moderator is assigned or self-assigned

Moderation can occur electronically between identified pairs or at a single event where team members meet and moderate together.

Where a module is run as part of collaborative provision, moderation should include representation from all relevant partners.

**When do I do internal moderation?**

Internal moderation is normally carried out on a sample basis, in order to corroborate the accuracy of the marking standards and quality of feedback applied by the first marker. It is the most usual form of moderation activity, and should be used for all assessments where other forms of moderation do not apply. Internal moderation should be completed within the 20 working days assessment feedback period and before provisional grades are made available to the students. All summative assessments should be subject to internal and external moderation.

**What do I do if the first and second grades are different?**

Differences between markers should be resolved by discussion and agreement in the first instance. Where agreement cannot be reached, the assessment will be third marked, usually by the module leader.

In this case, after the module leader has third marked they will consider whether the result of third marking indicates that the marking practices of the first or second marker requires further investigation and/or action. This requires discussion with both markers and consideration of a range of further measures including:

* No further action
* Additional third marking of a further sample of assessments marked by either or both markers.
* Additional use of blind or non-blind moderation for assessments marked by a specified marker
* Remarking of assessments marked by either marker or both.

Before releasing provisional grades to students, the module leader will review the moderation process as entered on the form, assessing the levels of disagreement between markers and the agreed grades. Where levels of disagreement are consistently above one whole grade band, they will consider a range of further measures including:

* No further action
* Review of a further sample of assessment marked by either or both markers.
* Additional use of blind or non-blind moderation for assessments marked by a specified marker
* Remarking of assessments marked by either marker or both

Justification for decisions will be reported on the Internal Moderation Report

**External moderation**

**What is external moderation?**

External moderation is undertaken by experienced academic peers (External Examiners), independent of the University, to ensure that the level of achievement of students reflects.

**How do I do external moderation?**

A minimum sample of 15% of the work for each item of assessment for individual modules must be made available to the External Examiner(s), as described in section 12.18 of the Assessment Policy. External Examiners are not expected to arbitrate in the event of disagreement between first and second markers, and are not expected to change grades for individual items of student work.

**When do I do external moderation?**

External moderation can take place after the 20 working days assessment feedback period and after provisional grades are made available to the students. Assessment relating to level 4 modules in three-year degree courses is not normally subject to external moderation after the first year of delivery.

**Moderation checklist**

* A formal published statement of standardisation and moderation procedures should be included as an annexe to the Student Course Handbook. The statement must specify how differences between markers are to be resolved
* Where a course is taught across different sites or through different partnerships, the course management team must specify in the formal statement the moderation arrangements across the sites or partnerships.
* Minimum requirements apply to the internal moderation of all summative student assessments, as described in section 12.12 of the Assessment Policy
* Where a course or module is delivered at more than one site, the External Examiner should be provided with the provisional statistical profile of grades for each site of delivery, so that they are able to comment on the marking and student achievement standards for each delivery site.
* The Internal Moderation Report must be completed and sent to the External Examiner

Link to [Internal Moderation Report Template](https://www2.worc.ac.uk/aqu/documents/InternalModerationReportTemplate.docx) – updated October 2021.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 2D_black_72dpi | **Process of standardisation and moderation** |

Anything noteworthy for future development is raised with

School Quality Coordinator and College Director/LTQE

Internal Moderation Report is completed and sent to External Examiner

If the same assessment task, learning outcomes, and criteria, previous work could be used and standardisation exercise can be completed in advance of submission date

Student submits piece of summative work for assessment

Module team undertake standardisation exercise before marking begins and form is completed

Individual assessors complete their allocated marking

Second marking is undertaken

Grades are agreed

Variation in grade(s)

Third marking is undertaken by Module Leader

Completed within 20 working days, before results are released to students

Can be completed after 20 working days, after results are released to students