A3.6.1 Introduction

i. Higher education institutions are expected to have in place transparent and fair systems for marking and moderation (UK Quality Code, chapter B6). The University needs to be assured that robust, effective and consistent internal moderation processes are being applied in all Departments across all Faculties. The details of these processes are likely to vary according to local circumstances and professional body requirements, but all Faculties should work to the definitions and minimum requirements set out below in developing their own internal moderation processes.

ii. The University recognises that one aspect of the promotion of fairness in assessment requires that the potential for bias is recognised and that systems and processes that minimise opportunities for bias are put in place. To this end, the University has an agreed policy on anonymous marking for all assessed work that can be marked anonymously, which complements explicit and rigorous second marking and/or moderation schemes.

A3.6.2 Definitions

i. **Internal moderation** of assessed work is the process of ensuring that assessment criteria are applied consistently by examiners, that students are being treated fairly through the assessment process, and that there is a shared understanding of the academic standards students are expected to achieve. Moderation is the process of ensuring that the marks awarded for an assessment task across a module are within reasonable limits, in the context of the criteria against which students’ work is being assessed.

ii. Moderation may be limited to **sampling** and second marking a representative number of pieces of assessed work across the marking range from a cohort of students; or it may involve second marking the work of the whole cohort (**double marking**).

iii. **Second marking** is the process in which a second allocation of marks is given to a piece of work by a second internal examiner. This process may either be carried out blind (where the second examiner does not have access to the marks and comments of the first marker) or sighted (where the second examiner can view the marks and comments of the first marker, and adds their own). Dissertations should always be blind second marked.

iv. **Anonymous marking** is the practice of concealing the identity of the student who submitted the assessment from the staff member marking their work, until a mark is agreed by the marker. Only once a mark has been agreed will the student’s identity be revealed and feedback confirmed.

A3.6.3 Principles

i. All assessed work submitted for the award of University credit must be subject to a process of internal moderation, consistent with the Faculty moderation policy. This applies to all modes of assessment in all delivery locations. Where assessment is not in written form, every effort should be made to apply an appropriate form of moderation. Practice-based assessments must also be subject to an appropriate process of internal moderation.
ii. The marking and moderation procedures to be followed for a programme and individual modules should be agreed by the relevant Subject Committee, with reference to the Faculty policy for internal moderation, and reported to the Faculty Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee for endorsement.

iii. The process by which marks for assessed work will be allocated, including details of the internal moderation process to which it will be subject, should be clearly communicated to students via programme and module handbooks, along with the criteria for assessment.

iv. Evidence that an internal moderation process has taken place must be available for scrutiny by external examiners and other interested parties.

Collaborative Provision

v. The requirement for establishing robust internal moderation procedures applies equally to collaborative programmes leading to Oxford Brookes awards. Arrangements for internal moderation, which must involve at least one member of University staff (usually the Liaison Manager), should be agreed with the partner organisation and clearly set out in the Operations Manual.

A3.6.4 Timing

i. Moderation of coursework marks should be completed within an appropriate timescale in order to allow for the timely return of agreed marks and feedback to students, consistent with the terms of the Assessment Compact.

ii. The internal moderation process should normally be completed prior to the upload of marks onto the system for Examination Committees. Unmoderated marks must not be uploaded to the student record system, unless permission has been granted by the Programme Lead.

iii. Marks that have not been confirmed by an Examination Committee should not be issued to students, unless permission to do so has been granted by the Programme Lead. Assessed work that has been through the internal moderation process may be returned to students prior to the Examination Committee, on condition that the feedback sheet clearly informs them that the mark/grade given remains subject to confirmation.

A3.6.5 Procedure

First marking

i. All completed assessments should be first marked independently by appropriately experienced members of the module delivery team. Evidence of marking and an indication of how the marks have been allocated should be shown on all assessments.

ii. For non-written forms of assessment, e.g. oral examinations, presentations, or recitals, at least two internal examiners should normally be involved in first marking the assessment and agreeing the final mark for each piece of work. The external examiner should have access to the agreed comments of the assessors, which should be provided as feedback to the student.

Second marking

iii. If the internal moderation process for the module is based on double marking, all assessments should then be second marked.

iv. For modules employing a sampling approach to moderation, the internal moderator for the module (a member of academic staff other than the first marker/s) should then second mark a sample of completed assessments. Samples should:

- be representative of every delivery location, and every mode of study;
- be drawn from, and reflect, the full range of marks, including borderline cases and fail grades;
- be of an appropriate size with respect to the size of the cohort (10%, minimum of 5);
- include all components of the assessment for the module.
v. If there is clear evidence from the sample selected that there are serious discrepancies in the marks being awarded, the Subject Coordinator or Programme Lead should arrange for all the assignments affected (either within a specified grade band, or the whole cohort) to be re-marked.

vi. Internal moderation policies must be clear about the procedure to be followed in order to resolve any disagreement between first and second markers and assign a final mark for a piece of work.

vii. Students should be provided with a single mark on their assessed work, as agreed by the internal examiners, and the feedback given on their performance in the assignment must be consistent with the final assigned mark.

**Reporting**

viii. The Faculty moderation policy should set out the requirements for reporting on the conduct and outcomes of the internal moderation process, including those applying to collaborative provision (which should be set out in individual Operations Manuals).

**A3.6.6 External moderation**

i. Where a sampling approach to internal moderation is adopted, the sample of work that is moderated may be the same sample sent to the external examiner. If the sample that is sent to the external examiner does not include any of the work that has been sampled through the internal moderation process (for example, where a random sample is selected from across the grade bands), they should be provided with additional information about the internal moderation process that has been followed.

ii. The role of the external examiner is described in section A3.7 of the Regulations.

**A3.6.7 Anonymous marking**

i. All summative assessment shall be marked anonymously, unless it is not possible for that form of assessment to be carried out anonymously. This includes all summative assessment on courses delivered with a collaborative partner.

ii. For all instances where anonymous marking is not practised particular attention must be given to ensuring that assessment processes are fair, and are seen to be fair. This may include, for example, an explanation given to students enrolled for that module in a relevant Handbook and, as a minimum, all students must be informed when an assessment will not be marked anonymously.

iii. Examples of situations where the form of assessment may not allow for work to be marked anonymously include:

   a. where the marker has closely supervised the work being marked (e.g. projects, dissertations, portfolios); and
   b. where assignment topics are individual or small group based (e.g. personal profiles, work placement activities, independent studies, groupwork activities); and
   c. where assessment is based on observation (e.g., oral presentations, video assignments, poster presentations, music recitals, exhibitions, oral language examinations, laboratory skills assessments); and
   d. where assessing a student’s competence to practice in a professional setting.

iv. There are also certain situations in which it may not be possible to mark a student’s work anonymously, for example, where a student has been granted an extension to a coursework deadline, or has a disability that entitles them to "reasonable adjustment" of the format and/or deadline for coursework submissions, or in disciplinary cases referred by an Academic Conduct Officer. These cases differ to the exceptions noted above, however, as they are personal exceptions and not variations from the expectation for anonymous marking on an assessment level. The exceptions listed above would apply to all students submitting work for a specific
assignment, whereas these ad hominem scenarios are examples where anonymous marking may not be possible for specific individual reasons

v. Where at all possible, assessed work should be submitted electronically to facilitate anonymous marking. Where electronic submission is not possible or nor practised, then the standard University Coursework Submission Sheet should be used.

vi. Once a marker has agreed a mark, the student’s identity may be revealed to the marker. If a piece of work is double-marked, the student’s identity may not be revealed to either marker until after the second marker has completed their assessment. This is to ensure that feedback on assessments can be personalised and tailored to that student. However, a mark should not be amended once a student’s identity has been revealed.

For further information about these regulations, please contact the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience).

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