

Marking Standardisation, Second Marking and Moderation policy

Location	Oxford Campus, c/o Activate Learning, Jericho Building, Oxford OX1 1SA
Monitoring	The Principal and Head of Quality Assurance
Overall responsibility	Academic Board
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Purpose

- Ensure consistent application of assessment criteria across cohorts.
- Promote fairness, reliability, transparency, and validity in all summative assessments.
- Identify and address discrepancies in grading to uphold academic standards.
- Enable effective oversight by internal and external examiners.
- Ensure assessments are moderated and second-marked accurately to mitigate individual biases.

Scope

These processes apply to all final examinations, coursework, and presentations that contribute to students' final grades at EMN UK. They ensure rigorous, fair, and consistent assessment standards across all assessments and align with EMN's internal and external quality frameworks.

Introduction

Marking standardisation, moderation and second marking apply to any final examination and any other coursework or presentation that count towards a student's final grade/mark. This is to ensure that suitable and rigorous (reliable, transparent, fair and valid) and rigorous standards are applied consistently within the practice of assessing summative assessments.

If the marking standards and practices implemented by EMN at group level are higher than those defined in this document for a particular module/course, then EMN group level standards will be applicable.

Moderation

Moderation is a process intended to assure that an assessment outcome is fair and reliable and that assessment criteria have been applied consistently.



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Whilst moderators (Internal verifiers) check the marked work of a student for procedural inaccuracies (including checking whether marks have been awarded accurately), second markers will mark a piece of academic work produced by students to allow comparison of first against second marking.

Internal moderators should use the internal moderation of assessment decisions form when carrying out moderation work.

Internal moderation of assessment decisions (moderation) should take place after all marking has been carried out. Timing allocated to the process of marking and second marking must allow for moderation, and any consequential remedial action can be completed prior to an exams commission/board.

Marking standardisation

Marking standardisation should happen between the examination (assignment) submission date and the marking commencement date and it is only applicable where a module (unit) was taught and assessed by more than one lecturer. The relevant Head of Programme will call a standardisation meeting with all concerned lecturers to discuss sample answer scripts at various levels. Standardisation meetings must be evidenced.

If the markers are unable to agree on the marks awarded, they should consult the module leader or Head of Programme to agree on a way forward. The Head of Programme has the final say if no agreement can be reached.

Second marking

All second marking currently done at EM Normandie UK is open-double marking of a sample of marked work. The objective of second marking is to assess the students' work by two (or more) independent markers to safeguard and assure academic standards against individual bias.

Second marking should only be carried out by a lecturer who is qualified in the respective field and familiar with the assessment processes and procedures of the subject being assessed.

The second marker will be able to see the first marker's annotated feedback and marks. Evidence of second marked work should be retained and be made available for review by the exam board (or an exam commission) and external examiners.

For non-written forms of assessment, e.g. oral examinations or presentations, at least two assessors should normally be involved in grading the assessment and agreeing the final mark for each piece of work. Where this is not possible, an assessor should grade the assessment in front of a witness able to attest to the examination and assessment taking place in a fair and transparent manner.

A presentation grading template should be used in writing feedback and grades and both the assessor and the witness (or both assessors) should sign the form and include the date / place of the assessment (including online via a suitable platform). If a second assessor or a witness is not available on the day, the first assessor should ensure that the oral examination or presentation is recorded (with the students' consent) and presented to the Head of Programmes as a record.

Sampling strategy – information for Head of Programme

It is good practice to second mark a high number of scripts across the mark spectrum. All scripts should undergo second marking if the 1st marker is new.

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In total, at least the square root of the total number of first marked scripts should be subject to second marking. If the square root of the total is less than 6 scripts, then a minimum of 6 scripts should be second marked. In addition, the following should be considered for second marking

- all failed answers
- all answers that were awarded over 90% (18 and above out of 20)
- all grade boundaries/upper borderlines (e.g., 49%, 69% or 9 out of 20, 15 out of 20)
- all answers written by students who had reasonable adjustments

Check marking

At the discretion of the Head of Programmes, a second marker may be asked to evaluate marked scripts as a check marking exercise. In this context, the second marker will check the accuracy of the marks awarded by the first marker(s) and confirm their accuracy rather than conducting independent marking of the already marked scripts.

If any anomalies or discrepancies are found the first marker's feedback or marks, the second marker will bring this to the attention of the Head of Programmes for necessary action.

Check marking should only be done if standard second marking is not possible within the given timeframe or where there are other valid reasons approved by the Principal. The approach is mostly suitable for quantitative assessments such as multiple choice answers where the marks can be checked objectively) rather than a qualitative approach (e.g., essay-type assessments).

Resolution of disputes in marks awarded

If the variation in marks given by the first and second markers is 10% or less of the maximum total marks available for the exam paper, (e.g., 2 out of 20), the first marker's awarded mark will stand.

If the variation is greater than 10% the Head of Programmes or the module leader may call a meeting with the two markers (or engage in an email exchange) to discuss and agree on a mark ("agreed mark"). This should be annotated and evidenced on the answer script.

If a mark cannot be agreed at this meeting, the Head of Programmes can appoint a third marker and decide the final marks awarded based on the judgements made by the 3rd marker. The third marker can be an external subject expert.

Who is responsible for organising moderation, standardisation and second marking

Overall responsibility for the organisation and oversight of moderation, standardisation and second marking lies with the relevant Head of Programmes.

Please note, first markers must not moderate or second mark their own work. They may, however, second mark or moderate another marker's work for another assessment within the same module.

Good practice recommendations

- First and second markers should annotate feedback separately
- Markers should be conversant of the FHEQ framework, the relevant level and the number of credits awarded for the module being marked.
- Different markers should each use a different colour for marking should
- The marks awarded by first and second markers for each question (and 'agreed marks' where appropriate) should be visible
- marking should be anonymous



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- Hand-written feedback must be legible and should link to achievement of learning outcomes and recommendations for improvement

External examination of assessment decisions (external moderation)

It is important for assessment decisions to be reviewed by the relevant external examiner before the exams board.

Once the internal marking process is completed (1st, 2nd marking and internal moderation), the Head of Programme will arrange for a marked sample of work to be sent to the external examiner, together with the examination question paper, mark scheme and any document related to internal moderation.

Heads of Programme will ensure that the External Examiners receive an adequate cross-sectional sample of grades (usually around 3-6 papers per subject) for review.

Once the relevant External Examiner reports have been received, the Head of Programme will file the reports in an on the relevant shared folder, and action any recommendations prior to the exams board if necessary.



UK Version control table

Version	1	Name	Role	Date
Created by:		Shane De Fonseca	UK Head of QC and accreditations	30-10-23
Approved by:		Miriam Schmidkonz, Principal		
Version	2	Name	Role	Date
Amended by:		Shane De Fonseca	UK Head of QC and accreditations	30.09.2024
		<i>Second marking sample amended to square root of total or 6 scripts minimum. Reference to FHEQ, credits and level made within advisory notes. EV and IV amended to EE and IM.</i>		
Changes approved by:		EM Normandie Oxford – Academic Board		13/11/2024
Version	3	Name	Role	Date
Amended by:		Shane De Fonseca	UK Head of QC and accreditations	12/02/2025
		Scope and purpose added, minor amendments		
Changes approved by:		Academic Board		14/05/2025