

Marking Policy

Introduction

This policy is a statement of the principles and processes that govern **the marking of all assessments that contribute to a mark**. It applies to all modules on both undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses delivered by the University of Essex Online (UoEO).

A list of definitions and marking policies is given below along with a table in appendix one showing the minimum requirements applied to different forms of assessment.

The requirements outlined in this policy are minimum requirements. Departments may second mark, moderate or double mark more work if they wish or if they are required to do so by a professional body.

1. Definitions

1.1 Summative Assessment

Summative assessments are those which contribute to a module mark, award mark, degree classification or any professional requirements of a course.

1.2 Formative Assessment

Formative assessments are those for which students may receive feedback, that does not contribute to any module mark, award mark, degree classification or any professional requirements of a course.

1.3 Examinations

Open-Book (unrestricted) – the student may access any resources to support them to answer the assessment. The work must be the student's own and guidance on the expected approach to referencing will be provided. Examinations should be open-book except where there is a good case for closed-book exams, for example professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements. Such exceptions must be approved by the Deputy Academic Director.

Only an examination which is invigilated should be classed as an examination and displayed as such on a transcript. This definition would also cover open-book examinations and MCQ tests.

1.4 Coursework

Coursework formats include but are not limited to essays, presentations, projects, reports, portfolios and oral exams. **Tests** are classified as coursework. They are scheduled in a student's timetable.

1.5 Single Marking

Student work is marked by one individual. Only for assessments components up to and including 40% of an individual module. Students have the right to request that the work is remarked if they disagree with the original mark (see: Section 4 for further information).

1.6 Single marking using a marking schedule, marking scheme or optical mark recognition (OMR)

This is usually found in science departments. Normally there should be some kind of clerical check to ensure that marks have been added up correctly and assigned to the correct candidates where OMR is used. Where marking schedules are used for exams, they must be sent with draft exam papers to the External Examiner for comments and approval.

1.7 Moderation

Moderation is a process separate from that of marking and provides assurance that assessment criteria have been applied appropriately and consistently, reflecting the shared understanding of the markers, and is an approach which enables comparability across academic subjects (qaa.ac.uk). A moderator reviews a sample of the marked student work and liaises with the first marker if they believe that the marks were not at the correct level. A moderator would not change individual students' marks for the work, but the first marker and moderator would agree whether marks should be reviewed across the particular piece of assessment or module, which may lead to marks being adjusted. In the case of a major discrepancy, it may be necessary for all the work to be re-marked (by second marking or double-marking). This policy explains the role of both internal moderation and external moderation carried out by the External Examiner (s).

1.8 Single Marking with Moderation

Moderation must take place on individual assessments worth more than 40% of an individual module. Moderation must also take place where the original marker is a recently appointed associate tutor/permanent member of academic staff. All fails must be second marked and a random sample of 10% must be moderated.

1.9 Second Marking

This is where a second marker marks the student's work but has access to the first marker's marks and/or comments. Marks must be reconciled.

1.10 Double Marking

This is where two markers mark the work independently without access to each other's marks or comments about the work. Marks must be reconciled.

1.11 Reconciliation of marks

Where two members of staff are involved in marking a piece of work, they should make every effort to agree a mark, rather than merely averaging the two marks. Departments must keep a full record of both individual and agreed marks for all work which is second or double marked.

Where two internal markers are unable to reach agreement, the department should make every effort to resolve the matter internally, for example by involving a third person to arbitrate or, if necessary, to act as a third marker. Work should only be sent to an External Examiner, who will be asked to arbitrate, in exceptional circumstances. The External must be given access to written comments from the internal markers on the piece(s) of work involved. The department should then make every effort to agree a mark by reference to comments from the three markers (not purely by averaging).

In instances where a mark is not agreed upon after involving a third marker, departments should seek guidance from the Quality Team and the Deputy Academic Director.

1.12 Performance-based Coursework with Non-permanent Output

This is coursework such as presentations, where the student does not provide an output capable of being shown to the external examiner. (A presentation where output such as a PowerPoint presentation is submitted would still count as performance-based coursework with non-permanent output, unless the key learning outcome being assessed is academic content rather than the presentation skill).

2. Marking Policies

The Academic Department at The University of Essex Online follow internal moderation processes, which abides by the requirements outlined in this policy as a minimum.

2.1 Assessment Strategy (requirement for all departments)

Departments should develop an assessment strategy for each course, or set of courses, for approval/review in the validation or periodic review process. The assessment strategy should address the following issues:

2.1.1 Diversity of assessment within a course

2.1.2 Coverage of the module learning outcomes by assessment methods

2.1.3 The balance between assessment methods and types

2.1.4 Approaches to prevent and detecting plagiarism in assessment

2.1.5 Professional Body Requirements, if applicable.

2.2 Assessment of Performance-based Coursework (including oral presentations)

Performance-based assessment with a permanent output, capable of being shown to the External Examiner should be subject to the normal marking policy for essays/assignments, but only where the permanent output relates directly to the assessment criteria. For example, a presentation where output such as a Power-point presentation is submitted would still count as performance-based coursework with non-permanent output, unless the learning outcomes being assessed is academic content rather than presentation skills.

Performance-based assessments with a non-permanent output worth up to and including 40% of a module may be single marked. Where this type of assessment contributes to more than 40% of a module, work must be either double-marked, team marked, video/audio recorded or attended by the external examiners based on 100% coverage of the whole cohort.

2.3 Assessment of Group Work

2.3.1 Group work with permanent output should be subject to the normal moderation procedures for essays and assignments.

2.3.2 The allocation of marks for group work should be in line with the learning outcomes of the module, drawing on examples of good practice.

2.3.3 The assignment criteria should make clear how marks are awarded for teamwork and individual performance. This balance should be considered carefully when such assignments are designed.

2.3.4 Group work with non-permanent output should be subject to the policy for the assessment of performance-based coursework.

2.3.5 The maximum amount that a joint mark (where a single group mark is derived from people working together in a group) can contribute to a single module is 25%.

2.4 Marking or moderation of the work of students who are partners or close relatives

Staff should not mark or moderate (including second and double-marking) the work of partners or close relatives.

2.5 Marks for participation in tutorial, class or seminar discussions

Marks for participation may contribute to no more than 5 percent (5%) of the overall mark of a module and the marks should relate to a module learning outcome.

2.6 Moderating/second-marking/double-marking where the first marker is a partner or close relative



Staff should not act as moderator or second marker where their partner or a close relative is the first marker.

2.7 Marking or moderation of the work of students who are partners or close relatives

Staff/Associate Tutors should not mark or moderate (including second or double-marking) the work of partners or close relatives.

2.8 Marking of Appendices

The aim of an appendix is to clarify information in the main body of a report or essay (for example, discussion transcripts) and therefore, no new piece of information should be placed in the appendix. Instead, marks for appendices should be applied as part of the structural assessment criterion for the piece of work.

2.9 Anonymous Marking

2.9.1 Formative and Summative Assessment

Anonymous marking only applies to summative assessment. It does not apply to formative assessment.

2.9.2 Anonymous marking of Examinations

The University of Essex Online operates an institution-wide policy of anonymous marking of all formal examinations.

2.9.3 Anonymous Marking of Coursework

- All summative coursework should be marked anonymously where it is practical to do so.
- Where it is not practical for coursework to be marked anonymously, departments will make students aware, in advance of the assessment task, that this is the case.



3. Requests from students to have their work re-marked

- 3.1 Requests for a formal re-mark must be made within 7 days of the original mark being released.
- 3.2 Coursework which is single marked- Where coursework has a permanent output and is single marked, students have the right to request formal re-marking of the piece of work if they disagree with the original or if they suspect there has been a procedural/administrative error.
- 3.3 Coursework which is moderated - Where coursework has a permanent output, has been single marked with a sample being moderated, or second marked, students have the right to request a formal re-marking of the piece of work under the following criteria:
- If the student suspects that there has been a procedural/administrative error.
 - If the work was not initially included in the sample for moderation/ second marking. The student may only request a remark under this criterion if:
 - The student has approached the initial marker (or suitable nominee appointed by the Head of Department) to obtain further feedback on the reasons for the initial mark before making a formal request for a remark; and
 - The form requesting a remark has been completed and submitted with the signature of the first marker confirming that the meeting has taken place, no later than two weeks from the initial feedback to students.
 - There may be exceptional circumstances where approval is given for a piece of work to be re-marked which falls outside of 3.1 – 3.3. Where this is the case the conditions set out in 3.5 - 3.9 apply. Students should contact their Student Support Team for guidance and should also note that approval will only be given in exceptional cases.

The following apply to all requests for a formal re-mark:

- 3.4 If a request for a formal re-mark is approved, work will be either second or double-marked and marks must be reconciled.



- 3.5 Where there are exceptional circumstances which prevent the second or double-markers from reconciling the marks, the work will be marked by two new markers who will reconcile their marks. Departments should explain the process for re-marking to students.
- 3.6 Students must be informed that marks can increase, decrease or remain the same after a request for a formal re-mark.
- 3.7 The right to request a formal re-mark can only be requested on one occasion for any particular piece of work (unless a procedural or administrative error is suspected).
- 3.8 Full feedback must be provided to students after a remark request.
- 3.9 Students may only request a formal re-mark of examination scripts if a procedural/administrative error is suspected.

4. The Use of internal and External Staff for Marking

4.1 The role of the External Examiner

Unless the External Examiner has been specifically sent coursework to arbitrate on a dispute between internal markers, their role will be as moderator. External Examiners should not act as second markers. In moderating student work the Module External Examiner is providing an independent overview of the consistency of approaches to assessment. As such, their primary concern is with the overall marking standard in the module rather than with marks obtained by individual students. The External Examiner should not alter the marks of any individual student.

4.2 The Use of External Markers

All student work is marked by staff/associate tutors working directly for the University of Essex Online in connection with the teaching and assessment of students. This ensures that the University of Essex Online's responsibilities to maintain academic standards are met.

4.3 Exemptions from the University of Essex Online's Marking Policy

If an academic department believes it is not possible to comply with an aspect of this policy the department must apply for exemption to this aspect and propose an acceptable alternative arrangement for approval by the Deputy Academic Director and Director of Quality and Compliance.

Responsible Manager(s)	Title	Date	Related Policies and Procedures
Dr Claire Ketnor	Deputy Academic Director	August 2025	<u>Late Submission of Coursework Policy</u>
Carol Dadd	Director of Quality and Compliance		

Appendix One - Marking Policies for all taught students

Coursework	Marking Protocol*
<p>An individual item of coursework worth up to and including 40% of an individual module:</p> <p>Essays/assignments</p> <p>Coursework tests using written answer papers, including in-class tests and progress tests</p> <p>Performance-based coursework with a permanent output, capable of being shown to the External Examiner</p> <p>Performance-based coursework with a non-permanent output</p> <p>Group work with a permanent output</p> <p>Group work with a non-permanent output</p>	<p>Single Marked</p> <p>Moderation required for new staff/associate tutor.** and assessed coursework titles and tests marked by multiple staff.</p>
<p>An individual item of coursework contributing to more than 40% of an individual module:</p> <p>Essays/assignments</p> <p>Coursework tests using written answer papers, including in-class tests and progress tests</p> <p>Performance-based coursework with a permanent output, capable of being shown to the External Examiner</p> <p>Group work with a permanent output</p>	<p>All fails must be second marked and a random 10% sample must also be moderated. (For PGT courses, 'fail' encompasses marks in the condonable 40-50% range).</p>

Individual items of coursework comprising at least 30 credits (including PGT dissertation and final year UG project reports)	All must be second marked or double marked.
Performance –based coursework with a non-permanent output that contributes to more than 40% of a single module. Group work with a non-permanent output that contributes to more than 40% of a single module.	All must be double-marked or team marked or video/audio recorded or attended by the external examiner.
Coursework testing using OMR sheets or online testing tools. Coursework marked to a marking schedule.	An independent check must be made to ensure that the programme is working accurately and that marks have been assigned to the correct candidates.
Examination	Marking Protocol
All examinations at level 4 and exams at level 5 which count for 50% or less of the module mark ^{***}	The scripts only need to be single-marked, but all fails must be second-marked and a random sample (10%) must also be moderated. Where a formal marking schedule is in place it is not necessary to second-mark or sample – but an independent check must be made on all marks calculations. Marking schedules must be reviewed as part of the department's procedures for reviewing draft exam papers.
All examinations at level 5 which count for greater than 50% of the module mark; and all examinations at level 6 and level 7 ^{***}	All scripts must be second-marked, double marked or marked to a marking schedule.



More detailed information on the marking policies for each department will be available in the student handbook.

* These are minimum requirements and departments can moderate, second mark or double mark more work if they wish, or if they are required to do so by a professional and/or regulatory body. If a department believes it is not possible to comply with an aspect of the University of Essex Online marking policy, then the department must apply for an exemption to this aspect and propose an acceptable alternative arrangement which must be approved by the Deputy Academic Director and the Director of Quality and Compliance.

**It is for the departments to determine how long contemporaneous second marking or moderation needs to continue for a new member of staff/associate tutors.

***An independent check on all marks calculations must be made where a marking schedule is used. Marking schedules must be sent with draft exams to External Examiners for comments and approval.

Appendix Two

Guidance on the operation of the policy on anonymous marking of coursework.

1. Duration of anonymity

- 1.1. When work is marked anonymously, anonymity should be maintained until the marks for the piece of work have been released to students. In cases where work is subject to second marking, double marking or moderation, anonymity should be maintained until all stages of the marking and moderation process have been completed.
- 1.2. When work has been marked anonymously and a student subsequently requested that the work should be re-marked (See Section 3) the designated second marker/s should receive an anonymised copy of the student's work, and should not be told the student's identity until the re-marking process has been completed.

2. Circumstances when it is not practical for work to be marked anonymously

- 2.1. The University of Essex Online recognises that it is not practical for all coursework to be marked anonymously. Where this is the case, departments should make students aware, in advance of the assessment task, that their work will not be marked anonymously.
- 2.2. Coursework which falls into the following groups will not be marked anonymously and there is no requirement for the Department to seek permission not to use anonymous marking. This applies to individual pieces of coursework, and not to assessment for a module as a whole (unless all pieces fall into these categories).

a) Marks which are based on observation of students

This includes performance-based coursework, student presentations, practical demonstrations or activities, and marks for participation or contribution to class discussion.



- b) **Work which has been closely supervised or negotiated where a marker has had interaction with the student such that the student's work cannot be anonymous to that marker.**

This includes laboratory work, assessment of work-based learning activities, specific dissertation or capstone projects where the student has received close supervision to an extent that prevents anonymity being maintained, and agreed forms of assessment and feedback in case of individual student learning needs. Where work which falls into this category is subject to moderation, second marking or double marking (see Marking Policy for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Work, sections 1.8, 1.10, 1.11 for definitions), the second assessor should receive an anonymised copy of the student's work. For work which falls into this category and is subject to moderation or second marking, the second assessor may see the first marker's comments on the work, with the exception of any comments which might reveal the student's identity.

3. Other circumstances when the identity is revealed

3.1. In the following circumstances, anonymity may be lifted:

- a) **Where it is not possible to maintain anonymity and carry out duty of care or to follow a policy or procedure effectively**, including:
- Investigation into a suspected academic offence, and marking of work submitted in response to a penalty relating to an academic offence;
 - Where the nature of work submitted for an assignment raises concerns that a student, or someone else, may be at risk of serious harm.
- b) **Where marks from another institution contribute to an award**
- Marks awarded by other institutions, for example those which are recognised through accreditation of prior or experiential learning, or through study abroad, will follow the other institutions marking policy.



4. Requests for coursework not to be marked anonymously

- 4.1. Where a Department wishes to argue that it is not practical for anonymous marking to be used in situations other than those listed in section 2, the Head of Department may make a case in writing to the Deputy Academic Director.
- 4.2. The written case should be sent in the first instance to the Head of Quality. The Head of Department should explain why it would not be practical for anonymous marking to be used in the particular circumstances and should state what alternative measures will be taken to ensure consistency of marking (for example, second marking or moderation, where these are not already required by the Marking Policy). The decision of the Deputy Academic Director and Director of Quality and Compliance will be final.
- 4.3. Requests should be made in sufficient time to allow any changes that may be necessary on the VLE to be implemented by the Learning Technology team. Early consultation with the Learning Technology team should be evidenced in the written submission to the Deputy Academic Director.