Guidance on Marking and Moderation of Student Work

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This Guidance to be read in conjunction with the Code of Practice for Assessment of Students

Context

This guidance has been prepared by a group of staff from both academic schools. It is the outcome of a staff development event in January, at which a series of workshops revealed that, whilst staff are generally secure in their understanding of marking and moderation, there are a few inconsistencies in our understanding of these processes which can usefully be eliminated before the next assessments take place.

Status

The Guidance on Marking and Moderation of Student Work provides detail of how to implement the Code of Practice for Assessment of Students.

Implementation

This guidance must be implemented by all academic staff from July 2015. Heads of School are responsible for ensuring this.

Section 1: Marking

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> **1.1 Assignment Briefs**
> All assignments across the institution have an assignment brief. These are uploaded onto the VLE with other information about the module. All include a set of learning outcomes for the assignment taken from the module specification and all module learning outcomes for the module are met by the assignment brief[s] for the module.
> Each assignment brief has:
> - Name of pathway, level, module code, module title, assignment title;
> - Description of task;
> - Module outcomes to be tested;
> - Mark grid;
> - Date and time of submission and availability for collection;
> - Note on plagiarism;
> - Word count and penalties set out;
> - Description of mark scheme and weighting;
> - Note about anonymous marking;

- Date on which the assignment brief is to be introduced to the group.

Some assignment briefs also included detailed information about presentation of work.

Annual Action on Assignment Briefs:

Academic Coordinator is required to audit all assignment briefs to ensure that they comply with best practice, using an example which will be provided in staff training.

1.2 Mark Schemes

All mark schemes in the University have emerged from a common marksheet for written assignments. This is broken into 4 equally weighted criteria:
- Knowledge and Understanding; Development of an Argument; Use of Sources; Communication and Expression

Most written assignments still use this 'generic' set of criteria. However, as assignment tasks became more sophisticated, 'bespoke' criteria for practical and group assessments were developed. The tailoring of marking criteria for a particular assignment may be necessary as this ensures that all learning outcomes are assessed, especially when practical skills need to be demonstrated. However, there are dangers if there is a proliferation of marksheets, so each programme and subject should monitor this carefully.

It has been decided that an overarching set of descriptors will be introduced and each Academic Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that all marksheets are aligned with this overarching set of descriptors, to ensure consistency.

An analysis of descriptors on marksheets revealed that they were generally (but not always) detailed. It was not possible to tell whether the descriptors were threshold or mid band. The best practice included mark sheets which included at least 8 bands, dividing the 1st and fail categories into several bands. However, some marksheets failed to differentiate within the band of 70 to 100. Many marksheets had a band of 30-34 and 35-40, dating from the time when each assignment was individually compensated.

Annual Action on Mark Scheme:

Each academic team is required to review every marksheet/ mark scheme used on the programme/pathway. These should be audited for:

- **Number of mark schemes used overall and possible reduction in number;**
- **Consistency of level – using benchmarks/FHEQ;**
- **Alignment with new overarching set of descriptors;**
- **Consistency with learning outcome level;**

- **Ensuring that all learning outcomes to be tested by the assignment are evident in the marking grid;**
- **Ensuring that the mark scheme contains sufficiently detailed descriptors;**

1.3 Practice of Marking

Annotation of work

We do not seek to make practice totally consistent across the University, but there should be consistency within teams. Each team is required to consider the annotation of work. Inconsistencies and inaccuracies in grammar, spelling and punctuation should be highlighted for part of the assignment, with a note in the margin to indicate when the marker has ceased to note recurring inaccuracies.

Teams are required to comply with the implementation of new initiatives such as Turnitin. The Academic Co-ordinator is ultimately responsible for ensuring that guidance and processes are in place for their teams.

The marking of work of students with SpLD should be monitored by teams. Academic Co-ordinators must ensure that their teams are compliant with agreements in place for these students, in marking practical, written assignments and examinations.

Usually it will be clear which band the work falls into and the use of marks ending in '9' will be restricted in number, because these marks constitute borderlines and are usually moderated.

1.4 Breadth and Depth of Assessment

Academic teams are required to regularly review the range of assessments on the programme and consider whether or not they are still fit for purpose. Issues discussed should include the use of written examinations, formative and summative assessment, practical and group assessments and electronic assessments such as blogs, wikis and posters. There must be an explicit reference to these considerations in the Annual Monitoring Report. This should be monitored by Heads of School.

Section 1 OVERALL ACTION:

Staff Training is needed to ensure that all recommendations under sections 1-4 above are drawn to the attention of staff. Heads of School have an on-going responsibility for ensuring that existing and new staff are aware of the guidance on marking.

Section 2: Moderation

2.1 What is Moderation?

Moderation is the process through which levels and quality of marking are checked for consistency and thoroughness. It is an attempt to confirm and agree another tutor's marks and does not often lead to marks being altered.

Moderation is a process used to ensure consistency of marking across each subject area. It may also be used across different programmes and subjects. All modules and assignments are subject to either moderation or double marking. The Code of Practice for Assessment of students sets out the rules for whether moderation or double marking should be applied and sets out sample sizes but does not give detail about the process of moderation. This guide should provide all the information needed about how moderation should be carried out.

Moderation ensures that all tutors have the level of marking for each batch of assessed work checked for consistency with another tutor. It acts as a standardisation tool against sector norms and gives the institution academic credibility. It also helps students to have confidence in our marking systems. Moderation is also an opportunity for learning outcomes and marking criteria to be checked for appropriateness and for processes to be assessed for consistency. The dialogue which takes place during moderation reinforces professional development.

Size of sample:

- At level 4, a sample of at least 10% of the work will be selected for moderation
- At levels 5 and 6, a sample of at least 20% of work will be selected for moderation

The size of the sample may vary depending on the number in the cohort. For example, if there are less than 20 students, more than 20% will be sampled. For practical work, performances and presentations, practice will be developed by individual teams, but a notional 20% will be a benchmark.

Features of sample:

A full range of marks should be included, with each band represented. Samples will normally include all fails and firsts and some borderlines (marks ending with '9'). This may again vary a little, depending on the numbers.

Selection of sample

Ideally, the sample will be selected by the moderator, who has sight of all the marks. Sometimes this may not be possible and the marker will select the sample, making sure a broad range of marks is included.

External Examiner Sample:

The external examiner will receive the sample which has been internally moderated, and will see evidence of moderation.

2.2 **The process of moderation – assuming agreement can be reached**

When a tutor has completed a batch of marking and completed feedback sheets for each student and a marksheet with all marks on it, a sample is identified, using the sample size identified in the Code of Practice for Assessment of Students. The sample should include all firsts and fails and most borderlines, along with a reasonable spread of other marks. The sample should contain at least six pieces of work.

a) Initially, the moderator will check that the process of marking appears to have been carried out appropriately. This includes:

- Making sure scripts are appropriately annotated;
- Making sure that marks have been recorded on the marksheet;
- Ensuring that the feedback sheets are detailed and supportive;
- Noting that work has been marked anonymously where appropriate;
- Ensuring that the assignment brief is clear and that learning outcomes have been tested appropriately;
- Ensuring that marking criteria are clear and appropriate.

b) Next, the moderator will closely read each piece of work in the sample and note the mark that they would have awarded if they had marked it independently.

c) The moderator will set their own marks alongside the original marks and seek general agreement, where possible using the first marker's comments to concur.

d) Providing the moderator is within 2-3 marks of the original marker for each piece of work, no changes will be made to the original marks.

e) The moderator will mark with an * the sample on the marksheet and complete the moderation sheet, to demonstrate that moderation has been completed.

f) The moderator will lodge notes on the process evidencing their own marks with the academic coordinator and these will be retained for 3 years.

Please note that no indication should be given to the student that their work was part of the moderated sample. No individual marks should be changed. The sample should not be selected on the basis that the work was unusual or difficult to mark, but should represent work of which the first marker is confident.

If teams have developed group moderation practices they should discuss these with the Executive Dean for Learning, Teaching and International and should ensure that the above process is documented. Team moderation is not discouraged, but it must be a robust and evidenced process.

2.3 The process of moderation – when agreement cannot be reached

If the moderator is not able to agree with the first marker's judgment, the following process should be used. It would be expected in any case where scaling is recommended, that the sample size would be increased to make sure the scaling recommended is appropriate.

a) If the first marker has been consistently generous or too punitive, up to 5 marks each way, a scaling of up to +5 or -5 across the whole set of marks may be recommended. The sample will be passed to the Academic Co-ordinator for verification and the scaling will be applied by the AC in consultation with the original marker.

b) If the first marker has been too generous or punitive at either the higher or lower end of a sample of work, the moderator may recommend a scaling to a particular band of the work, indicating this in a table, up to 5% and applied to all the marks in that band.

67-100	-3 recommended
0-66	No change

The sample will be passed to the Academic Co-ordinator for verification and the scaling will be applied by the AC in consultation with the original marker. In this case it is important to check that the rank order or the original marker is not altered.

c) Occasionally, a scale may be recommended that rectifies generosity in a particular band and punitive marking in another band. In this case, further scripts will be selected and the scaling will be carried out carefully to ensure that the rank order is not changed. Marks will need to be plotted on a grid to demonstrate this. The AC will be closely involved in any major scaling of this kind. The resulting grid might look like this

67-100	-3
61-66	stet
51-60	+3
0-50	+5

d) When scaling is not possible without altering rank order, there should be a re-mark of the whole set of scripts.

e) The External Examiner should be informed of any scaling or remarking that has occurred in categories c) and d) above, with evidence of the process undertaken.

2.4 Second Marking

When second marking has been indicated as necessary in the Code of Practice for Assessment of Students, a different process is needed. The sample of work should be closely marked 'blind' without reference to the first marker's opinions, marks or feedback. Once the second marking has been completed, the marks should be compared with the first marker and the process above used if there is not agreement, within 2-3% of the first marker.

2.5 Cross moderation

Cross moderation is the process by which, in accordance with the Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision, the University maintains academic standards in the assessment of collaboratively-delivered programmes. In consultation with the subject Link Tutor, samples of marked work are presented by the delivering institution, for cross-moderation by the link tutor and/or nominated subject team at BGU. If the programme is delivered by more than one partner institution, cross moderation may also involve colleagues from the other delivering institution(s), under the supervision of BGU. This helps to ensure parity and standardisation across all partner institutions, delivering the same programmes.

Cross moderation follows the same principles that have been set out for any other BGU programme and is carried out in addition to internal moderation at the delivering institution, and before the work is submitted to external examiners.

Section 2 OVERALL ACTIONS:

Staff training for all academic staff, visiting tutors and collaborative partners to clarify our operational practice to be carried out at least annually.

Grade Descriptors for all Undergraduate Provision

These descriptors are inter-related: with regard to marks of 40% and above there is an assumption that in awarding marks in one band work will have met the requirements of the band; with regard to marks of 39% and below there is an assumption that in awarding marks in one band work will **not** have met the requirements of the previous higher band. When marking an assessment there is an expectation that the work will clearly demonstrate the criteria within each band for the mark allocated:

Mark range	Criteria
90-100%	• Displays exceptional degree of originality • Exceptional analytical, problem-solving and/or creative skills • No fault can be found with the work other than very minor errors, for example minor typographical issues
80-89%	• Work of outstanding quality, evidenced by an ability to engage critically and analytically with source material • Likely to exhibit independent lines of argument • Highly original and/or creative responses • Extremely wide range of relevant sources used where appropriate
70-79%	• An extremely well developed response showing clear knowledge and the ability to interpret and/or apply that knowledge • An authoritative grasp of the subject, significant originality and insight, • Significant evidence of ability to sustain an argument, to think analytically, critically and/or creatively and to synthesise material • Evidence of extensive study, appropriate to task
60-69%	• A detailed response demonstrating a thorough grasp of theory, understanding of concepts, principles, methodology and content • Clear evidence of insight and critical judgement in selecting, ordering and analysing content • Demonstrates ability to synthesise material, to construct responses and demonstrate creative skills which reveal insight and may offer

	some originality • Draws on an appropriate range of properly referenced sources
50-59%	• An effective response demonstrating evidence of a clear grasp of relevant material, principles and key concepts • An ability to construct and organise arguments • Some degree of critical analysis, insight and creativity • Demonstrating some conceptual ability, critical analysis and a degree of insight • Accurate, clearly written/presented
40-49%	• A response demonstrating an understanding of basic points and principles sufficient to show that some of learning outcomes/assessment criteria have been achieved at a basic level • Suitably organised work demonstrating a reasonable level of understanding • Covers the basic subject matter and is appropriately presented but is rather too derivative and insufficiently analytical • Demonstrates limited conceptual ability, levels of evaluation and demonstration of creative skills • Demonstrates adherence to the referencing conventions appropriate to the subject and/or task
30-39%	• Overall **insufficient** response to the assessment criteria • A weak response, which, while addressing some elements of the task, contains significant gaps and inaccuracies • Indicates an answer that shows only weakly developed elements of understanding and/or other skills appropriate to the task • May contain weaknesses in presentation that constitute a significant obstacle in communicating meaning to the assessor
20-29%	• Overall **insufficient** response to the assessment criteria • A poor response, which falls substantially short of achieving the learning outcomes • Demonstrates little knowledge and/or other skills appropriate to the task • Little evidence of argument and/or coherent use of material

10-19%	- Overall **insufficient** response to the assessment criteria - A very poor response demonstrating few relevant facts - Displays only isolated or no knowledge and/or other skills appropriate to the task - Little adherence to the task
0-9%	- Overall **insufficient** response to the assessment criteria - Displays virtually no knowledge and/or other skills appropriate to the task - Work is inappropriate to assessment task given

Appendix 2

Generic postgraduate taught mark descriptors

Modules are marked on a range of 0-100%. Mark descriptors are given in the table below.
A mark below 50% indicates a Fail grade (the shaded boxes).

Mark Range	Criteria
90-100% Distinction	• Demonstrates an exceptional ability and insight, indicating the highest level of technical competence. • The work has the potential to influence the forefront of the subject, and may be of publishable/exhibitable quality. • Relevant generic skills are demonstrated at the highest possible standard.
80-89% Distinction	• Demonstrates an outstanding ability and insight based on authoritative subject knowledge and a very high level of technical competence. • The work is considered to be close to the forefront of the subject, and may be close to publishable/exhibitable quality. • Relevant generic skills are demonstrated at a very high level.
70-79% Distinction	• Demonstrates an authoritative, current subject knowledge and a high level of technical competence. • The work is accurate and extensively supported by appropriate evidence. It may show some originality. Clear evidence of capacity to reflect critically and deal with ambiguity in the data. • Relevant generic skills are demonstrated at a high level.
60-69%	• Demonstrates a sound, current subject knowledge. No significant errors in the application of concepts or appropriate techniques. May contain some minor flaws. • The work is well developed and coherent; may show some originality. Clear evidence of capacity to reflect critically. • Relevant generic skills are demonstrated at a good level.
50-59% Pass	• Demonstrates satisfactory subject knowledge. Some evident weaknesses; possibly shown by conceptual gaps, or limited use of appropriate techniques. • The work is generally sound but tends toward the factual or derivative. Limited evidence of capacity to reflect critically. • Relevant generic skills are generally at a satisfactory level.
40-49%	• Demonstrates limited core subject knowledge. Some important weaknesses; possibly shown by factual errors, conceptual gaps, or limited use of appropriate techniques. • The work lacks sound development. Little evidence of capacity to reflect critically. • The quality of the relevant generic skills do not meet the requirements of the task.

30-39%	• Demonstrates inadequate subject knowledge. • The work lacks coherence and evidence of capacity to reflect critically. • The quality of the relevant generic skills do not meet the requirements of the task.
20-29%	• Demonstrates seriously inadequate knowledge of the subject. • The work contains minimal evidence of awareness of relevant issues or theory. • The quality of the relevant generic skills do not meet the requirements of the task.
10-19%	• The work is almost entirely lacking in evidence of knowledge of the subject. • No evidence of awareness of relevant issues or theory. • The quality of the relevant generic skills do not meet the requirements of the task.
0-9%	• The work presents information that is irrelevant and unconnected to the task. • No evident awareness of appropriate principles, theories, evidence and techniques.

For information regarding the award of 'Merit', refer to the Regulations for Taught Masters

GUIDELINES OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR MARKING THE EXAM WORK OF STUDENTS WITH A SPLD.

What is a SpLD?

Students with a SpLD (Specific Learning Difference/Difficulty) have particular difficulties that impair communication. **Under the Equality Act 2010 adjustments to the assessment of students with a SpLD is a legal requirement.** SpLDs cover a range of impairments including dyslexia, dyspraxia, and dyscalculia.

Many students with a SpLD may be very gifted in some areas yet have incongruous difficulty in others - in particular, an inability to remember grammatical conventions and spellings. They may have many creative ideas yet find it hard to put them down on paper.

Students with a SpLD are currently allowed to have coursework proof-read before submission. In examinations extra time is authorised but this relates to processing speed and does not make adjustments for difficulties in written communication.

This basic set of guidelines has been produced to allow for appropriate adjustments when marking *exam work* of students with a SpLD. **In short, their exam work should not be marked for spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax.**

Although not included in the grade awarded, where markers annotate the student's work to correct spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax it is recommended that no more than five types of error that occur repeatedly are selected. Markers should then show, with clear, simple examples, why the errors are wrong and what would be correct.

Adjusted Marking Guidelines

These guidelines are to enable staff to mark the exam work of students with a SpLD in a way that does not penalise SpLD attributes. Markers should exercise professional judgement to make the required reasonable adjustments within their existing marking strategies.

1. **Read the student's work fast, looking for ideas, understanding and knowledge.** Fast reading is best done by:
   - ignoring any mistakes of spelling, grammar, punctuation or syntax;
   - not correcting or commenting on the spelling, grammar, punctuation or syntax.

2. **Make constructive comments** – indicate and explain where work is good. Where work is weak, explain what is required. **Make comments and explanations straight forward; write legibly and use good English;**

3. **Tell the student how the marking of their work has been adjusted.** Include the following text on the feedback report:

    As part of the flagging and adjusted marking process your paper has <u>not</u> been marked for spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax.

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