Imperial College
London

Protocol for Marking and Moderation

1. Definitions

1.1. The College uses the following terms, based on QAA guidance[1], in relation to marking and moderation:

1.2. Second marking

1.2.1. Assessment of students' work by two (or more) independent markers as a means of safeguarding or assuring academic standards by controlling for individual bias.

1.2.2. Types of second marking acceptable at Imperial include:

- Double marking: Where each examiner makes a separate judgement and in the event of disagreement a resolution is sought. (Double marking can be open or blind).
- Check marking: Where the second marker determines whether the mark awarded by the first marker is appropriate and confirms it if appropriate (by definition, this can only be open marking).

1.2.3. Second marking can be open or blind:

- Open marking: Where the second marker is informed of the first marker's mark before commencing
- Blind marking: Where the second marker is not informed of the first marker's mark before commencing

1.3. Auditing

1.3.1. An audit of assessment material is distinct from second marking. Auditing is an additional check to ensure that all pages/questions have been marked (by both markers) and that marks have been totalled correctly and there are no arithmetical or other errors in the marking process. As no academic decisions are taking place, auditing can be carried out by an administrative member of staff. By definition, auditing can only take place once second marking has occurred.

1.4. Moderation

1.4.1. A process intended to assure that an assessment outcome is fair and reliable and that assessment criteria have been applied consistently. Moderation focuses on the marks awarded to the full set of assessed work for a task,

[1] QAA: UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance: Assessment QAA: Understanding assessment: its role in safeguarding academic standards and quality in higher education: A guide for early career staff (September 2012) / QAA Glossary

module or programme in the context of the academic standards for the award. It is therefore separate from the question of how differences in marks between two or more markers are resolved and is not about making changes to an individual student's marks.

2. Marking Processes at Imperial

2.1. At Imperial, internal second marking is the norm for the marking of written assessments which count towards a student's degree classification (i.e. marking is carried by at least two markers). The markers use either blind or open double marking or check marking. Where there are differences in marks for individual assignments, questions, etc, these may be resolved between the markers themselves or with the intervention of a third party. The third party will be an approved marker. It may not be an External Examiner or a GTA.

2.2. The College *Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study* Section 12 sets out the requirements for marking and moderation. A limited number of students are governed by the College Examination regulations which outlines the expectations for these students (see regulations website for further details). The regulations detail that all assessment must either be blind double marked or first marked and check marked. Any assessment designated as the final major project (for example dissertations, thesis or end of research or consultancy projects) must always be blind double marked (*Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study*, para 12.9)

See: https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/regulations/

2.3. For machine marked assessments (e.g. multiple choice question (MCQ) papers) where no academic judgement is required in the marking process, second marking would be unnecessary. These assessments will be check marked.

2.4. External moderation for the cohort is carried out by the External Examiner(s) through viewing a sample of the student assessments. External examiners comment on the reliability of the assessment process which reference to the College's academic standards - especially whether assessment criteria have been appropriately applied - and on its fairness.

2.5. The Board of Examiners for each programme agree the final marks for progression and award purposes.

2.6. Good Practice for Marking and Moderation

2.6.1. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) wishes to highlight the following examples of good practice with regard second marking and moderation:

- A marking criteria for each assessment and model answers should be provided to the markers (and External Examiners)

- Departments should let their External Examiners and students know the method of marking used per assignment e.g. open or blind double marking or check marking. For students, this information should be included in the student handbook.

- Double marking (blind or open) is considered good practice

- All assessment which counts towards a candidates final degree classification should be annotated to show 1st and 2nd marking has taken place, where relevant

- For double marking, a marking cover note should indicate 1st and 2nd markers' assessment per question

- For check marking, a marking cover note should indicate whether the 2nd marker agrees with the first marker

- Different coloured pens should been used by each marker

- Each marker should initial each page to confirm it has been read

- All comments from each marker with regards to marks awarded should be included

- Each marker should indicate whether they are acting as College Examiner, Assistant Examiner or Assessor and whether they are acting as first or second marker

- Markers should know in advance how differences in marks will be resolved

- Where a 3rd party intervenes when marks cannot be agreed by the first and second marker this should be clearly noted on the cover note. (The third party should be another internal College Examiner,)

- An explanation should be provided on how final marks were agreed where marks awarded by each marker differ

- Each marker should sign to confirm agreed marks

- It is good practice to carry out an audit of scripts prior to sending to the External Examiner(s).

- An adequate sample of assessments (which counts towards a candidates final degree classification) should be made available for External Examiner(s) to view – this will normally be material from the top, the middle and the bottom of the range, all borderline(+/-2.5%) material and all material assessed internally as failures. For Master's programmes they should also see all material assessed internally as a distinctions.

- It is recommended that, where students are taught and assessed by a partner institution/organisation, the students work should be checked by an Imperial College Examiner (a sample of work is acceptable). This work may also be moderated by the External Examiner/Board of Examiners.

- Where possible, it is recommended that departments use a cover note for all individual scripts (examples are given below)

2.7. Cover notes should include the detail below**:**

Title of Programme:

Name of Assessment (e.g. title of exam)

Candidate:

Question Number	Marks Awarded by First Marker	Marks Awarded /Confirmed by Second Marker	Agreed Marks*	Comments
Total				

*An explanation must be provided on how final marks were agreed where marks awarded by first and second markers differ.

Type of marking used: Open Double Marking / Blind Double Marking / Check Marking

First Marker: College Examiner / Assistant Examiner / Assessor

Second Marker: College Examiner

Audited: YES / NO

It is recommended that departments use a cover page for all scripts sent as a sample to the External Examiner(s)

Title of Programme:

Name of Assessment (e.g. title of exam):

Candidate	Marks Awarded by First Marker	Marks Awarded /Confirmed by Second Marker	Agreed Marks*	Comments

*An explanation must be provided on how final marks were agreed where marks awarded by first and second markers differ.

Type of marking used: Open Double Marking / Blind Double Marking / Check Marking

First Marker: College Examiner / Assistant Examiner / Assessor

Second Marker: College Examiner

Audited: YES / NO

Approved by QAEC

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Notes and latest changes:		Document replaces "Protocol for Double Marking" approved July 2013 Formatting changes made on 9 March 2016 Version 2 changes: removed external examiners role in disagreements between markers	

	Section 2 updated to reflect changes in College regulatory framework