



Assessment Moderation Policy

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Middlesex University

Assessment Moderation Policy

Introduction

1. Assessment Moderation forms part of the commitment by Middlesex University (“the University”) to inclusive and fair assessment, by ensuring that the marking and feedback practice provided by one educator is moderated by another.
2. Moderation ensures that assessment of student work on each programme is checked for quality, consistency and fairness, and for parity of standards across sites and partners of provision.
3. Assessment Moderation:
 - supports fair and inclusive marking by accommodating multiple perspectives on the way we assess student work.
 - recognises and reconciles differences in academic judgement of the quality of student work.
 - allows scrutiny of the ways we apply our marking criteria and feedback expectations, promoting reflection on practice and supporting consistency.
 - enables checks and balances across patterns of individual, module and programme marking.
 - provides evidence for external examiners to offer further commentary, assurance and recommended enhancements to assessment.

Scope

4. This policy applies to all programmes of study at the University, including its international campuses and academic partnerships. It applies to ‘post-issue moderation’: that is, the moderation of submitted, summative student work.

Guiding principles

5. Moderation seeks to ensure that all marking decisions are reliable, robust, consistent (within cohorts and over time), and as fair as possible, and that assessment criteria are applied appropriately.
6. Moderation seeks to ensure that differences in academic judgement between markers can be acknowledged and fairly and transparently addressed.
7. This policy aligns with the relevant Expectations for Standards and Quality within the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education as set out in the [Advice and Guidance document for Assessment](#).

8. The policy supports the University to set up robust evidence for internal and external reviews of assessment, marking and feedback practices, and is aligned to our Assessment Promise and related policies on inclusive assessment design.

Moderation: Baseline Requirements

9. The nature of moderation (sample moderation, full moderation, double marking, jointly assessed vivas, etc.) will be agreed and communicated at programme level.

10. At Level 3 and Level 4 assessments will not be subject to internal moderation but marking and feedback quality will be scrutinised as part of other quality assurance processes, such as module surveys, programme review, and student voice groups.

11. At Level 5 and above, all summative assessments will be subject to moderation.

12. All Level 6 and Level 7 capstone assessments (dissertations / projects) will be moderated through double marking. Arrangements for double marking shall be determined at programme level.

13. The standard moderation sample for all programmes should be: 10% of each summative module assessment, plus all fails.

14. In cases where the 10% sample produces *fewer* than 10 assessments for scrutiny, the sample is a minimum of 10 student assessments, plus all fails.

15. In cases where the module cohort is smaller than 10, all summative assessments will be moderated.

16. In cases where the module cohort is over 200, the *maximum* sample size, will be 20, plus all fails.

17. Sample distribution should be inclusive of assessments across grade bands, with attention paid to borderline graded assessments.

18. Larger programme and module cohorts may have more than one marker for assessments. In these cases, the moderation process will check parity of standards and application of criteria for marking and feedback across the marking team. The internal moderator should normally be separate from the module teaching team.

19. Full moderation (the internal moderation of *all summative assessments*) will be used where a first assessor has not marked at a particular level of study previously.

20. Programme leaders will guide the development of marking and moderation practice, with relevant support from the Centre for Academic Practice Enhancement (CAPE) as required.

21. The External Examiner will be given access to all student work that has been moderated.

22. The External Examiner will be sent the record of moderation processes relevant to the programme, and will be expected to comment on quality, standards and parity of assessment moderation as part of their annual report.

The Role of the Internal Moderator

23. Except in cases of double marking, the role of internal moderation, in both sample and full moderation, is to check that all elements of the assessment have been appropriately graded according to criteria and that the standards of assessment and feedback are robust.

24. The comments and grades of the first assessor will be available to the internal moderator. The internal moderator will be expected to scrutinise the quality of the feedback provided to students, as well as the appropriateness of grade given, and provide brief comments confirming or challenging the quality of the marking.

25. It is not the role of the internal moderator to mark the work again except in cases where the standard of assessment marking and feedback is not deemed appropriate.

26. Where instances of the same programmes or modules are delivered across our campuses, the moderator will check parity of marking standards, and consistent application of marking criteria and feedback guidance, across sites. Moderators can be based at global campuses.

27. Where the marking of work has been undertaken by a partner institution, a further step of assessment moderation may be undertaken by the Academic Link Tutor. Scrutiny of assessment and feedback practice will feed into institutional review and re-approval.

Moderation and Grade resolution

28. If the internal moderator agrees that the standard of assessment is appropriate, a record of moderation should be completed, identifying the student work included in the moderation sample and summarising the moderation process or dialogue undertaken in reaching agreement.

29. The moderation record will be made available to the External Examiner, with the Programme Leader accountable for this record.

30. Where moderation agreement cannot be reached by the first assessor and internal moderator, a second internal moderator will be appointed by the Head of School or Department, to complete moderation of the disputed sample and, normally, look at a broader sample of student work from the module.

31. The first assessor, initial internal moderator, and second internal moderator will meet to agree grades, with the second internal moderator having final judgement. A record of this process should be made available to the external examiner.

Moderation of live or practice-based assessments

32. In cases where marking of summative assessments takes place in a 'live' situation (e.g. oral presentations, practice-based tasks and competency tests, performances, showcases, online presentations) the assessment should be moderated in one of the following ways:

- at least two members of the programme team are present (in person or online, depending on mode of delivery), one to assess and one to provide internal moderation

- the assessment is recorded to appropriately capture the mode and conditions of assessment. Internal moderation in this case is undertaken subsequently with reference to the sample of recorded assessments.

33. Samples of assessments undertaken in these conditions will be made available to external examiners, along with records of moderation discussion and agreement.

34. All recordings of assessments should be stored in line with [University policy on the retention of students' assessed work](#).