Faculty of Medical Sciences – Masters by Research (MRes) Moderation and Scaling Policy 2017/18

This policy should be read in conjunction with the University’s Examination Conventions for Research Masters Degrees and Policy on Moderation and Scaling

Moderation of assessment tasks

Drafts of all summative assessments comprising 30% or greater of 20 credit modules (i.e. 6 credits or greater) must be reviewed by the MRes moderation and scaling committee.

Work subject to moderation

1. All exam scripts will be double marked, except where the examination format is MCQ.

2. All pieces of work for modules assessed exclusively on coursework will be double-marked.

3. With respect to assessment of the research project, the dissertation, oral presentation and both scientific and lay abstracts, these will all be blind double marked.

4. Other than work covered by statements 1-3 above, all submissions contributing 6 credits or greater (i.e. 30% or greater of a 20 credit module) will be subject to moderation.

Double marking of exam scripts

The first marker will annotate the script, indicate in a statement at the end how he/she arrived at the final mark, with reference to the marking criteria, and indicate the mark (as a percentage) in the table on the mark sheet. The second marker, without knowledge of the first mark, will read the answer and first marker’s comments and allocate an independent mark, which they will enter on a separate mark sheet. If marks on both markers’ sheets agree to within 10% then the mean mark will be taken as the final mark. If the marks differ by greater than 10% then both markers will attempt to agree a mark. If an agreed mark cannot be reached then the Module Leader will identify a third marker, who will have access to both marks and the annotated script. If the third marker agrees to within 10% of the mark of either of the other two markers, then the mean of the two closest marks will be taken as the final mark. If the third marker disagrees with both the first and second markers then all three marks will be presented to one of the overarching external examiners, who will make the final decision.
Double marking of coursework

If marking a hard copy, the first marker will annotate the script, indicate in a statement at the end how he/she arrived at the final mark, with reference to the marking criteria, and indicate the mark (as a percentage) on the script. If marking an electronic submission, the first marker will provide to the second marker a short statement indicating how he/she arrived at the final mark, with reference to the marking criteria. The second marker will read the answer and first marker’s comments and decide if the mark awarded is appropriate (within 5% of the mark the second marker would have given). If the second marker deems that the first mark is appropriate then that mark is taken as the final mark. If the second marker is of the opinion that the mark should be more than 5% higher or lower than the mark awarded, then both markers should attempt to agree a mark. If an agreed mark cannot be reached, the Module Leader will identify a third marker, who will have access to both marks and the annotated script/comments. If the third marker agrees to within 5% of the mark of either of the other two markers, then that mark will be taken as the final mark. If the third marker disagrees with both the first and second markers then all three marks will be presented to the Examinations Board.

Evidence of the moderation process (e.g. email correspondence or notes) should be provided to the Graduate School Office.

Moderation of submissions contributing 6 credits or greater of a 20 credit module (i.e. 30% or more).

If marking a hard copy, the first marker will annotate the script, indicate in a statement at the end how he/she arrived at the final mark, with reference to the marking criteria, and indicate the mark (as a percentage) on the script. If marking an electronic submission, the first marker will provide to the moderator a short statement indicating how he/she arrived at the final mark, with reference to the marking criteria. A sample of 20% of all submissions, or a total of 10 pieces of work (whichever is the greater number), will be moderated. The sample must include work across the full range of marks awarded. All work given a mark <50% (fail) but greater than or equal to 45% must be included in the sample. The moderator will be identified by the Module Leader. Individual marks may not be adjusted as part of this process. The moderator will read all of the scripts in the sample along with the marker’s comments and decide which of the following conclusions apply:

a. The marks map onto the assessment criteria and no changes are required.  
b. The marks do not map onto the marking criteria in a consistent way (e.g. too high or too low).  
c. The marks do not map onto the marking criteria but in an unsystematic way. In the case of conclusion “b” scaling should be considered (see below). In the case of conclusion “c” all work should be
remarked by a second marker, identified by the Module Leader, then a sample moderated again. Evidence of the moderation process (e.g. email correspondence or notes), including identification of the scripts included in the process, should be provided to the Graduate School Office.

**Blind double marking of oral presentations**

Both markers will award marks independently and will then confer to reach an agreed mark.

**Blind double marking of project dissertations**

Each dissertation will be marked by an external examiner and by an internal examiner. Each will receive separate copies of the dissertation and mark using NESS, according to the set criteria. If the two markers agree to within 10% then the mean mark will be taken as the final mark. If the two marks awarded differ by greater than 10% then the internal and external examiners will be asked to attempt to agree a final mark, or to adjust their initial marks to within 10% of each other; in the latter case the mean of the two adjusted marks will be taken as the final mark. If the external and internal examiners are unable to reconcile their marks such that they agree to within 10% then one of the two overarching MRes external examiners will be asked to decide a final mark, having had access to the comments and mark breakdown of both original markers.

**Blind double marking of project abstracts**

Both markers will award marks independently and will then confer to reach an agreed mark or to adjust their initial marks to within 10%. In the latter case the mean of the two adjusted marks will be taken as the final mark.

**Blind double marking of project posters**

A mark for the poster will be awarded separately by a nominated member of the MRes team and by the research project external examiner. Where these marks differ by greater than 10% the MRes team member will decide in the first instance if adjusting their mark to within 10% of the external examiner’s mark is appropriate, in which case the final mark will be the mean of the external examiner’s mark and the adjusted team member’s mark. If the MRes team member determines that they are unable to adjust their mark to within 10% of the external examiner’s mark, then both markers must discuss and attempt to agree a final mark. If agreement cannot be reached one of the two overarching external examiners will decide the final mark, having had sight of the marks and comments from the two original markers.
**Decisions on module mark scaling**

An ad-hoc scaling committee, including the DPD, Chair of the Examinations Board and at least one other member of the MRes team, will meet to consider if scaling of any module marks should be applied. The distribution of marks for all modular components of the programme will be considered by the committee and where there is deemed to be evidence of unreasonable bias or a skewed distribution the following actions will be taken: [1]. Module leaders will be asked to reconsider the marks and provide a written explanation or rationale for the unusual distribution of marks; [2]. Where this answer is not deemed satisfactory by the scaling committee, the chair of the Examinations Board will adjust all of the marks given bringing them into line with marks for other similar (appropriate) modular taught components. [3]. The final adjusted marks will be agreed by the scaling committee before being reported to the Examinations Board.