SAPL Moderation and Scaling Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the University's examination conventions and policy of moderation and scaling.

Organisation

The Director of Planning and Urban Design and the Director of Architecture shall make arrangements to ensure that all work subject to the policy is moderated. Each module will be allocated a moderator. Marking is allocated three weeks after work has been submitted by students and moderation should be carried out in the following week - i.e. week four. The school aims to return all work within **20 working days**. It is the module leader's responsibility to ensure that moderation is carried out correctly and to the agreed timescale.

Coverage

All summatively assessed work is subject to moderation of its marking.

Different types of assessment

Examinations

A sample of marked scripts will be reviewed by the moderator. See below for information on the approach to sampling.

Essays and Reports

A sample of marked scripts should be reviewed by the moderator. See below for information on the approach to sampling.

Design Projects/Presentations

All design project work/presentations, marked by review, are attended and assessed by at least two members of staff. Moderation should as matter of principle include a process of cross-cohort or cross-studio comparison.

Dissertations

Dissertations will be blind double marked. This means that the moderator does not know what mark the first marker has allocated and cannot see the first marker's comments.

Selection of Samples

Samples of work for moderation will be selected so as to test the security of standards across the full marking range and where the candidate has failed. Class borderlines should also be moderated, given the importance the School attaches to the profile of marks. Work should also be moderated where a candidate fails to follow the procedures or is penalised for failing to answer the question.

The normal sample size is 10% of the number of pieces of work, or 10 pieces of work, whichever is the larger.

In cases where there are new members of staff (including hourly paid staff) assessing work, sample sizes will be increased in order to ensure the security of the marking process.

Outcomes of moderation

Where all the work for a module is blind double marked (as in the case of dissertations) if the two marks are less than 10% different and within the same degree classification, then an average of the two marks will be taken. Where the two markers do not agree and there is a greater than 10% difference in marks and/or they are in different degree classifications, then they will attempt to agree a joint mark. If they are unable to agree the dispute will be referred to a third marker to determine the agreed mark.

Where a sample of work is moderated, individual marks will not be changed. Where the moderator agrees that the marking is in accordance with the marking criteria for the school/subject, the marks are confirmed. Where the moderator disagrees with the marking by at least 10% then consideration will be given to total double marking of all work, where marking is deemed unreliable, or scaling of the marks, where the marking shows a systematic error.

Recording the moderation process

In order that there should be an audit trail for moderation, there must be written evidence that moderation has taken place. Therefore moderators must fill in a moderation sheet and submit this with the assessed work at the time that marks are returned for recording.

Review of module performance across modules and over time

Performance across modules is reviewed on an annual basis. The means, range and standard deviation for all modules are considered with a view to identifying modules where student performance does not match normal expectations or where marks do not map to the common marking scale. Module performance will also be compared to module performance in previous years. In such cases, it should be considered whether marks ought to be scaled (see below).

Information to students

The actual moderation forms will not be made available to students but are made available for review by the External Examiners.

Scaling

Where the marks for an assessment exceptionally fail to meet normal expectations for the range and spread of marks, then scaling will be considered. This would normally arise because of some unforeseen problem in the assessment which renders the marks out of line with the cohort's performance on other modules or past performance on the same module.

The Module Leader and the Degree Programme Director will initially consider whether a systematic adjustment to the marks is required. If they cannot agree the issues will be referred to the Chair of Board of Examiners. The key issue to determine is whether the pattern of marks fairly reflects student achievement and to consider what the reasons for the pattern of marks are. If marks are deemed to reflect fairly student achievement, then no scaling is required. Scaling can move marks both up and down and will not necessarily involve the same adjustment across the whole of the mark range. In determining how marks will be scaled sample scripts will be tested around key boundaries, such as the pass/fail threshold and key classification boundaries.

Updated May 2017