

London School of Theology
Marking and Moderation Policy

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Date Last Approved:	May 2022
To be Reviewed:	2 years
Review consultation:	Academic Board
Date of Next Review period:	May 2024

1. First marking

- 1.1. Written assignments to be submitted to and marked on Turnitin (except for exams taken on paper), using built-in grading tools.¹
- 1.2. Other types of assignments (e.g. video, audio) to be submitted and marked using appropriate tools.
 - 1.2.1. Grades and feedback are to be made available to students in Module VLE area.
- 1.3. For written assignments, marker to leave margin comments.
 - 1.3.1. Marker should normally use the text tool that writes directly on the page (to allow easy viewing by students).
 - 1.3.2. Referencing and proficiency in written English (spelling, punctuation, grammar) should be assessed as part of the final grade and mistakes should be flagged (or at least a reasonable proportion).
 - 1.3.3. In their comments markers should aim to interact with the content of the assignment as well as giving feedback on its quality.
 - 1.3.4. Where the assignment has a cover sheet indicating the student has a disability, markers should follow its advice. For example, for a student with a learning disability such as dyslexia, spelling and grammar should still be corrected but comments should be supportive in tone.
- 1.4. Summary feedback comments to be added to Turnitin feedback area.
 - 1.4.1. Language from the Common Spine should be used where possible to help students understand why they have been given a particular grade.
 - 1.4.2. Language such as 'excellent', 'good' and 'fair' in the summary should be consistent with rubric scores for those aspects of the work.
 - 1.4.3. Markers should follow the convention that 'excellent' denotes first-class work, 'very good' represents 2.1, 'good' 2.2, and 'fair' a third-class aspect.
 - 1.4.4. Ensure that feedback includes 'feed-forward' comments, helping students to understand how to improve future work.
 - 1.4.5. Ensure that the overall tone of feedback is positive and encouraging.
- 1.5. Marker to follow programme-specific (or module-specific) feedback grids (using Turnitin rubrics) as directed by the Programme Leader and agreed by Programme Board.
 - 1.5.1. These are for guidance, and qualitative only. The criteria are not equally weighted and should not be used to calculate a final grade.

¹ See [Turnitin guide and training video](#).

1.5.2. Note these guidelines for the rubrics:

Fair: 40-49 (3rd), Good: 50-59 (2.2), Very Good: 60-69 (2.1), Excellent: 70+ (1st)

- 1.6. Where students overshoot the wordcount, the following penalty should be given (and explained in summary area): minus one mark for every 3% (or portion thereof) by which the paper exceeds the word limit.
- 1.7. Overall cohort feedback on assessment and marking to be summarised on Module Summary Sheet, available on the module VLE page and viewable by External Examiners.
 - 1.7.1. Detail of individual grades is not required.
 - 1.7.2. Markers may highlight particular scripts where they would like moderator input (and are not firsts and fails).
 - 1.7.3. Markers should review any scripts scoring higher than 25% similarity on Turnitin and check the reason for this. They are advised to document, for the benefit of the moderator, any abnormally high similarities, including (but not limited to) those referred for academic misconduct.

2. Moderating

- 2.1. Module assessments to be moderated,² unless the Programme Handbook specifies second marking. The role of the moderator is to sample the cohort and to check the quality of marking with respect to:
 - 2.1.1. Consistency with external frameworks, such as the common marking spine, assessment guidance, module learning outcomes and prior experience of marking and moderating. Ensuring grade boundaries are appropriate.
 - 2.1.2. Internal consistency of grading across the cohort and previous cohorts if applicable.
 - 2.1.3. Checking high similarity scores and responses to plagiarism.
- 2.2. Students do not see feedback from moderators; this is a review exercise only.
 - 2.2.1. Moderators should not leave feedback comments on student work or make changes to the grade.
- 2.3. In moderating the cohort is considered as a whole, rather than individual grades.
 - 2.3.1. Individual grades should not be commented on,³ except where the first marker has asked for moderator input (see 1.6.2).
 - 2.3.2. The moderator may encourage the marker to reflect on their future marking in the light of particular issues.
 - 2.3.3. Moderators can make recommendations to the first marker regarding additional guidance or feedback that could be given to students in future.
- 2.4. Moderators should normally sample 10% of scripts, including all fails and firsts.
 - 2.4.1. It is recommended that the sample includes borderline scripts.

² Moderation is a review exercise to ensure the consistency of grading and feedback across modules and programmes. Moderation is carried out by sampling whereas second marking involves reviewing every student's work.

³ Since all scripts are not considered it is unfair to adjust some student grades without reviewing the whole cohort.

- 2.5. For small cohorts (e.g. fewer than 15 students), 10% is too small a number of scripts to be useful. Moderators are encouraged to review a selection of scripts across the grades.
 - 2.5.1. For cohorts of 6 students or fewer all scripts should be reviewed.⁴
- 2.6. For first-time LST markers, the whole cohort is to be reviewed by an experienced LST marker (preferably the module leader or other faculty member).⁵
 - 2.6.1. Additional discussion may take place between the markers in this case, with the experienced marker encouraged to guide the first marker with respect to grade boundaries and appropriate feedback.
- 2.7. Where the moderator is concerned about the grading of the sampled scripts, additional scripts may be checked. Where there are repeated abnormalities, for example significant inconsistencies with the common marking spine, or grade boundaries out of step with other modules, concerns should be communicated to the first marker and the Programme Leader.
 - 2.7.1. If grading is consistently out of step with the marking spine, the first marker may be encouraged to review the grading of the whole cohort.
 - 2.7.2. In exceptional cases the Programme Leader may arrange for the whole cohort to be re-marked.
- 2.8. The moderator to record checked scripts and additional comments on the Module Summary Sheet (on the VLE) and to let the first marker know. This sheet is available to the External Examiner.
 - 2.8.1. Moderators to note which scripts they checked and comment on the quality of grading or feedback as appropriate (see points 2.1.1-2.1.2).
 - 2.8.2. Moderators to check that the first marker has checked for plagiarism and reviewed any high similarity scores. This should be reported in the summary.
 - 2.8.3. Moderators and markers to avoid discussions about marking outside the Module Summary Sheet (e.g. by email), in order to ensure the process is transparent to External Examiners. Where verbal or other discussion has taken place, this should be clearly documented and points summarised in the Module Summary Sheet.
- 2.9. First markers receive comments from the moderator on the Module Summary Sheet and may review scores and feedback on Turnitin if appropriate. Final grades remain the responsibility of the first marker.
 - 2.9.1. Individual grades should not normally be changed, although a whole set (e.g. fails or firsts) may be reviewed and adjusted by the first marker if appropriate.
 - 2.9.2. Whenever the whole cohort has been reviewed (i.e. effectively second marking), individual grades may be adjusted in response to specific feedback. The Programme Leader may be consulted if needed.
 - 2.9.3. Any grade adjustments or other changes must be clearly documented by the first marker on the Module Summary Sheet. The process should be transparent to the External Examiner.

⁴ This is then effectively second marking, but has been left in this section to prevent the point being lost.

⁵ See footnote 5.

- 2.9.4. Where feedback from a moderator encourages a review of grading across the whole cohort, the first marker should consult the Programme Leader before continuing.

3. Second Marking

- 3.1. Some modules, for example the Level 6 Project, involve second marking.
- 3.2. Second markers review feedback and grades from first markers (i.e. this is not blind double marking).
- 3.3. The second marker should not make any comments on scripts or edit feedback. Their comments are not seen by the student.
- 3.4. Discussion between first and second markers should not take place in Turnitin, but in a separate discussion area in the VLE module assessment section.
- 3.5. Second markers should avoid recommending small adjustments, e.g. a disagreement of less than five marks which does not change the overall grade.
- 3.6. Where there is disagreement in scores or feedback and this cannot be resolved in conversation between the first and second marker, this should be resolved internally. The Academic Dean has the final decision. The External Examiner can comment but should not be asked to adjudicate.
- 3.7. First and second marks, and final agreed grades, should be clearly recorded in the discussion area on the VLE and will be reviewed by the External Examiner.

4. Marking of Performances and Other Practical Assessments⁶

- 4.1. Marking procedures for practical assessments vary and markers should consult the Programme Leader for details.
- 4.2. Some practical assessments are double-marked, others moderated/second marked. Where moderation occurs the guidelines in Section 2 continue to apply – if a sample of material is reviewed then grades should not be changed, if the whole cohort is reviewed then this is second marking and discussion of individual grades can take place.
- 4.3. Written feedback should be provided to students on the VLE, along with the final agreed grade, and student feedback should not normally include any discussion between markers.
- 4.4. Individual markers' comments and any discussion of grades should be recorded on the Module Summary Form or other agreed document and made available to the External Examiner on the VLE.

5. Additional guidance relating to students with disabilities

- 5.1. The requirement to assess proficiency in written English (spelling, grammar and punctuation) applies to all students, including disabled students, subject to compliance with the Equality Act 2010. The Office for Students legal requirement for reasonable adjustments does not cover the competence standards being measured, which includes 'technical proficiency' in written assessments as a means of communicating ideas and thoughts. For this reason, students with learning disabilities such as dyslexia and dysgraphia are not excluded from this requirement. The Office for Students guidance

⁶ Including Composition and Arranging.

states that it firmly believes that it is possible to comply with the Equality Act and also enforce strict spelling, punctuation and grammar rules at the same time.⁷

- 5.2. It is expected that students with learning disabilities will word-process both essays and exams to minimise spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. The 7-day automatic extension awarded to such students for essays is to provide them with opportunities to have their essays proofread before submission. An additional 25% (or 50% in few cases) time is awarded for exams, which also provides students additional time to complete and proofread their exams. This is in line with our legal obligation as a provider while at the same time ensuring quality in written assessments.

[end]

⁷ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/7c292a54-015d-4638-8c30-18e0eba00bf3/assessment-practices-in-english-higher-education-providers-ofs.pdf>