



SECRETARIAT

ACADEMIC POLICY SUMMARY SHEET

NAME OF ACADEMIC POLICY:	Management of Assessments Policy
PURPOSE OF POLICY AND WHOM IT APPLIES TO:	The policy sets out the University's approach to the marking and grading and management of taught undergraduate and postgraduate student work and forms part of the over-arching Assessment Framework.
RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ COMMITTEE WITH ROUTE OF APPROVAL:	Academic Affairs Committee and Academic Board
LEAD STAFF MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS UPDATE:	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student Development and Engagement)
PERSONS CONSULTED IN DEVELOPING POLICY:	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student Development and Engagement), College Directors of Education, College Directors of Academic Quality and Standards, Director of Quality, Enhancement and Standards
POLICY FINALLY APPROVED BY:	Academic Board on 29 June 2022
DATE OF ORIGINAL IMPLEMENTATION:	26 June 2019
DETAIL OF DISSEMINATION:	The revised policy was circulated to relevant staff in ??? and is available on the Secretariat's portal site.
PROPOSED DATE OF REVIEW	To be confirmed
SECRETARIAT OFFICER – MAIN CONTACT:	Officer to Academic Affairs Committee
DATE:	April 2023



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

POLICY ON MARKING AND GRADING, AND MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS' ASSESSED WORK IN TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

1. Introduction.

- 1.1. All formal assessments which contribute to a student's progression through or attainment of an award of the University are formally marked or graded. The marks or grades awarded will reflect the traditions and practices of individual cognate subject areas and will be influenced by any relevant QAA guidance. This document delineates University policy on the marking and grading of students' work, as a framework within which all assessors must work.
- 1.2. This policy relates to taught programmes, that is, undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, and any taught elements of taught doctoral awards. While this policy covers all forms of assessment, the main focus is on assessment types which involve grading the quality of the work relative to the standards set out in sections 3 and 4. These standards may be less relevant to assessment types which test basic knowledge and understanding, where the assessment grade is more likely to reflect the number of correct answers rather than the quality of an answer.

2. General Principles.

- 2.1. All validated and accredited taught programmes of the University consist of modules, which in turn contain explicit learning outcomes. A function of formal assessment within a module is to enable students to demonstrate that they have attained the learning outcomes of the module.
- 2.2. Not all formal assessments will be related to all learning outcomes of the module. Taken together, however, the set of assessments within a module must enable students to demonstrate the attainment of all its learning outcomes.
- 2.3. There are two main categories of assessment – formative assessment and summative assessment. These are sometimes referred to as assessment *for* learning and assessment *of* learning, respectively. Both happen in all learning and teaching environments, and the key to good assessment practice is to understand what each type contributes and to develop assessment practice to maximise the effectiveness of each.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is used to monitor and evaluate how students are learning as they work through a module or programme of study. It is designed to help students learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and on how it can be improved and/or maintained. It begins with diagnostic assessment, indicating what is already known and what gaps may exist in skills or knowledge. Formative assessment does not contribute towards credit.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment sums up what a student has achieved at the end of a period of study. The assessment is used to certify that students have achieved an appropriate level of performance, and it will indicate how far a student has met the assessment criteria used to judge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme.

- 2.4. Each summative assessment must have a set of assessment criteria, which describe the requirements and expectations of a given assessment task, making clear what the student needs to do to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes. These assessment criteria should be used to feedback to students to indicate how their grade was determined.
- 2.5. All assessments will be marked either as pass/fail and/or as a numerical value in the range 0 to 100. In the case of Higher National Awards, numerical marks will be used which represent grades of Pass, Merit, Distinction (See Appendix 1).
- 2.6. Attainment of learning outcomes is essentially a threshold statement, and where a module is graded as pass/fail, “pass” indicates that the student has achieved the threshold.
- 2.7. Where an assessment is marked in the 0 to 100 range, a pass mark of 40 (50 for PGT) indicates threshold achievement of those of the module’s learning outcomes being assessed, measured against the assessment’s criteria. Marks over 40 (50 for PGT) indicate the extent to which the threshold has been exceeded. The pass mark for a given module may be increased if the threshold needs to be higher to meet the requirements of an accrediting body.
3. **Standards for Undergraduate Programmes.** (Programmes at qualification levels 4/C, 5/I and 6/H of the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)).

- 3.1. Marking and grading within undergraduate level programmes are guided by the conventions of UK higher education in respect of degree classifications:

Undergraduate Honours Degree Classification:

First Class Performance	70 or over
Upper Second Class Performance	60 or over
Lower Second Class Performance	50 or over
Third Class Performance	40 or over

The following table presents high-level descriptors which clarify the interpretation of each of these performance levels.

Classification	High-level descriptors
First class (1st)	<p>The student should achieve all assessment learning outcomes to the threshold standard and demonstrate higher level attainment, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills demonstrate excellent initiative and personal responsibility was able to reflect critically and independently on their work demonstrate excellent problem-solving skills demonstrates high levels of technical and professional proficiency in communication¹
Upper second class (2:1)	<p>The student should achieve all assessment learning outcomes to the threshold standards and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills consistently demonstrated initiative and personal responsibility demonstrate an ability to reflect critically on their work demonstrate thorough problem-solving skills produces professional levels of proficiency in communication

¹ For written assessments, the expectation is of high levels of technical proficiency in written English, including spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Lower second class (2:2)	<p>The student should achieve all assessment learning outcomes to the threshold standards and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate strong knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills • demonstrate initiative and personal responsibility • demonstrate a well-developed ability to reflect on their work • demonstrate strong problem-solving skills • produces clear communication
Third class (3rd)	<p>The student should achieve all assessment learning outcomes to the threshold standards and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills • demonstrate initiative and exercised personal responsibility • demonstrate an ability to reflect on their work • demonstrate problem-solving skills • produces threshold standard of communication

Appendix 2 contains detailed descriptors grouped according to the standard cognitive areas which can be used in various combinations to inform assessment criteria and benchmarking statements and standards.

3.2 Where assessments are marked as a numerical value, assessors have a full range of marks available to them in whole numbers from 0 – 100. The following table presents an indication of qualifying statements that clarify standards that apply to performance in the upper and lower extremes of the available mark range.

Mark Range	Expected standard
90 - 100	Work consistent with first class performance which is exceptional in all areas
80 - 89	Work consistent with first class performance which is exceptional in most areas
35 - 39	Failing work which achieves many of the learning outcomes required for passing grade but which falls short in one or more areas
30 - 34	Failing work which may achieve some learning outcomes but falls short in most areas
1 - 29	Failing work which demonstrates little or no understanding of the learning outcomes for the module
0	Work submitted which contains no engagement with the learning outcomes for the module

4. **Standards for Postgraduate Programmes.** (Programmes at qualification levels 7/M and 8/D of the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)).

4.1. Research elements of taught doctoral awards are assessed on a pass/refer basis.

4.2. Where modules are marked as a numerical value, the following high-level descriptors should be applied by assessors:

Mark	High-level descriptors
Distinction 70 – 100	<p>The student presents research that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • display a full understanding of area of research and mastery of a significant body of data • use full range of sources, used selectively to support argument • provide a coherent and strong argument • display originality in analysis and subtlety of interpretation • be exceptionally well written/presented/performed to a high academic standard

Merit 60 - 69	The student presents research that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> display effective use of main materials, going beyond the standard secondary sources present coherent and concise argument of complex concepts present independent and critical evaluation of a range of theories show some evidence of originality be written/presented/performed to good academic standards
Pass 50 - 59	The student presents research that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> display a sound knowledge of principal materials relevant to area of study present a logical structure, though this may not be fully thought through display some capacity to critically reflect or analyse be unlikely to show evidence of originality be presented/written/performed to adequate academic standards
Fail 0 - 49	Many of the basic materials will be present but the work will be lacking in other areas, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> key information sources and content which will be limited unsophisticated use of key sources poorly structured and sustained argument displaying limited knowledge conceptual understanding, as exemplified in critical evaluation is poor defects in communication

Appendix 3 contains detailed descriptors grouped according to the standard cognitive areas that can be used in various combinations to inform assessment criteria and benchmarking statements and standards.

4.3 Where assessments are marked as a numerical value, assessors have a full range of marks available to them in whole numbers from 0 – 100. The table below presents an indication of qualifying statements that clarify standards that apply to performance in the upper and lower extremes of the available mark range.

Mark Range	Expected standard
90 - 100	Work consistent with a performance which is exceptional in all areas and could have the potential for publication
80 - 89	Work consistent with a distinction and is exceptional in most areas
40 - 49	Failing work which achieves many of the learning outcomes required for a passing grade, but which falls short in one or more areas
30 - 39	Failing work which may achieve some learning outcomes but falls short in most areas
1 - 29	Failing work which demonstrates little or no understanding of the learning outcomes for the module
0	Work submitted which contains no engagement with the learning outcomes for the module

5. Management of Assessments

- 5.1. Timeframes in the production cycle for assessment documentation should be consistently applied at School/Department level and should be arranged to ensure appropriate internal and external verification of all summative assessment items can be completed for documentation to be presented to students in a timely manner.
- 5.2. Assessment documentation must be completed prior to the commencement of teaching, be consistent with definitive programme and module specifications and normally be approved at the preceding Subject Board of Examiners. Coursework assessment briefs should normally be accessible to students by the first teaching day for a module. Assessment deadlines must be agreed by programme leaders and for best practice also be considered by Subject Committee prior to publication. All assessment deadlines should be published in advance of commencement of teaching. It is expected that moderation duties are allocated by the relevant Head of School/Department prior to module verification.
- 5.3. First sit and resit exam papers and mark schemes must be subject to internal peer review (see verification) and External Examiner approval prior to commencement of teaching of a module.
- 5.4. The formatting of examination papers must be consistent with University of Lincoln requirements, established rubrics and meet the published deadlines.
- 5.5. Assessment documentation production should follow the principles outlined in the Assessment Framework and Assessment Charter and Schools/Departments must ensure a consistent approach to the presentation of requirements to students; a checklist is provided in Appendix 4.
- 5.6. Documentation for all summative assessments should clearly identify the learning outcome coverage of the assessment together with an indication of the weighting of the assessment in relation to the overall module assessment strategy.
- 5.7. In presenting assessment documentation to students, wherever practical the documentation should include reference to the expected performance requirements for the assessment that respond to the detailed descriptors in Sections 3 and 4. The expected performance statements and assessment criteria should then form the basis for marking the submitted work.
- 5.8. Where feasible and possible, and where effective management of submissions and marks permit, the marking process for all written submissions should ideally be conducted using anonymous marking.
- 5.9. Assessment feedback should normally be written and supplemented where appropriate with oral comments. In normal circumstances, feedback should be returned to students within 15 working days of the published submission deadline, i.e. students submitting work before the published deadline should not have an expectation that early submission will result in earlier return of work. Where feedback will not be provided within 15 working days for good reason, e.g. in circumstances where a student has been granted an extension of time, illness of module co-ordinator etc., students should be informed of the timescale for feedback.

6. Moderation

- 6.1. In the context of this Policy, Moderation refers to the processes by which the University ensures an assessment outcome (i.e. a grade or mark) is fair, valid and reliable, that differences in academic judgement between individual markers can be acknowledged and addressed. It ensures consistency in marking within and between cohorts, across time, with University-wide grade and mark descriptors; whilst recognising that moderation should be appropriate to subject areas, the type of assessment and credit-weighting.

- 6.2. The main purpose of moderation is to verify that the standards of grades awarded are appropriate, consistent in relation to FHEQ level, associated grade descriptors and the published assessment criteria/rubric. Moderators are also expected to comment on marking practices within a module and the distribution of marks across a cohort and between cohorts as appropriate.
- 6.3. Moderation is required for **all** credit bearing summative assessment within the University of Lincoln irrespective of level. Summative assessment is that which contributes to credit. Although moderation of formative assessment is not required, Schools/Departments are expected to ensure consistency in formative assessment practices.
- 6.4. The outcome of moderation has three possibilities; it can be confirmatory, result in the adjustment of cohort marks or further review. In the context of objectively marked work, moderation would not normally be required (e.g. automated or electronic tests such as MCQs where there is a single correct answer), but procedural checking would be necessary. Moderation occurs before External Examiners review the operation of the marking and internal moderation process.
- 6.5. **Moderation Definitions**
- 6.5.1. *Double Marking*, used in full moderation, also known as Blind Double Marking, means *the marking of work independently by two tutors where they are unaware of each other's mark or comments*. Final grading is determined through subsequent discussion between markers and this process requires markers to note how the final grade was determined. For live assessments this is defined as the independent but simultaneous marking of work by two tutors followed by the formulation of a jointly agreed mark. Averaging of two marks is *not* moderation and should not be used as a resolution strategy. Schools must have robust processes in place to ensure that External Examiners can scrutinise the double marking process².
- 6.5.2. *Adjudication* – where Blind Double marking results in irresolvable differences between assessors an adjudicator will be appointed by the Head of School. The adjudicator makes recommendations to the Head of School/Department, who then takes a decision based on all three tutors' marks and comments. This decision is final in the sense that it is this decision which is forwarded to External Examiners as the set of internally approved marks.
- 6.5.3. *Second Marking*, used in sample moderation, is *the grading of work by two tutors where the second assessor is aware of the mark given by the first tutor. The second assessor is not required to provide comments for students, but to verify (using standardised University template or agreed equivalent³) the appropriateness of the initial mark and consistency with the assessment rubric.* For live assessments this is defined as the checking of marked work against assessment criteria by an independent tutor either present during the live assessment or who reviews a recording.
- 6.5.4. *Verification* is the checking of all proposed summative assessments, assessment criteria and marking schemes align with validated documents and University expectations. This verification process is usually conducted through internal peer-review and verifies the alignment of assessment criteria and rubrics with module learning outcomes and grade descriptors by level.
- 6.5.5. *Cross-moderation* - applies to modules with large teaching teams and ensures standards are applied consistently by individual markers; usually this involves statistical comparison, whereby significant statistical deviations between markers are subject to further review.
- 6.5.6. *Sample moderation* - is defined as the examination of a sample of student work (derived from a module/cohort as appropriate) by a second internal assessor. In sample moderation, the second internal assessor uses a process of second marking to verify or refute grading and reviews the conduct of assessment, including the consistent deployment of assessment rubrics.
- 6.5.7. *Full moderation* is the examination of all student work either by a second assessor or a team of assessors. A process of Double Marking is used in circumstances where full moderation is required.

² This means ensuring feedback and grading sheets from each assessor for every student are made available for external examiners, together with indications of how differences were resolved.

³ Agreement must be sort from the CDAQS

- 6.5.8. *Standardisation* - checking that assessment processes and criteria are applied consistently. This should occur where teaming teams are large and involves a two-stage process. In the initial stage, marks are agreed for a sample of papers to establish standards prior to the main marking process.
- 6.5.9. *Calibration* – a process of peer review carried out by members of a disciplinary and /or professional community who typically discuss, review and compare student work in order to reach shared understanding of the academic standard which such work needs to meet (AdvanceHE, 2022). The focus is assuring standards at national level and as such the expectation is that disciplinary teams engage in national calibration events as appropriate.

6.6. Moderation Procedures

- 6.6.1. Sample Moderation should not result in the adjustment of marks for an individual student or those sampled, but when adjustment is required, it should determine arithmetic changes across the module cohort(s). Arithmetic in this context refers to adjustment by specific numbers of marks across the cohort. Adjustment by a percentage of the original mark is not permitted in any circumstance.
- 6.6.2. Where the outcome of moderation is anything other than confirmation, guidance must be sought from the relevant College Director of Academic Quality and Standards.
- 6.6.3. *Dissertations (and equivalent)* - to ensure quality and consistency, all dissertations and equivalent independently supervised work comprising at least 30 Credits must be double marked and moderated. Where a dissertation or final independent project includes multiple items of assessment, it is permissible for assessment items comprising less than 20% of the overall module grade to be subject to second rather than double marking. If *all* pieces of assessment in a dissertation module are weighted less than 20%, double marking should take place for *most* of the elements of assessment, using an appropriate moderation process.
- 6.6.4. Exceptionally a Board of Examiners may agree to permit second marking to replace double marking. Such exceptions may include where specialist knowledge required for marking an assessment or assessments is limited to one member of staff, or where unexpected staff illness means that double marking is no longer possible. A clear rationale must be provided in each case together with evidence of the second marking process for scrutiny by the relevant external examiner.
- 6.6.5. Double marking may take place in other instances where this is a requirement of professional qualifications, or in other extraordinary circumstances as agreed with the Board of Examiners.
- 6.6.6. Where double marking does not apply, sample moderation must be used. Second-markers should review the marks and comments for the sample, and check that marking for the sample is consistent with the relevant common marking scheme, grade descriptors and marking criteria. If a team of first markers is involved, the module leader should also check that they are all taking a consistent approach using an appropriate method of standardisation and cross-moderation. Detailed procedures for moderation should be determined by and consistently applied at School/Departmental level.
- 6.6.7. **Sample Sizes:** Where marking is conducted by a team of first markers, samples must include assessments marked by each first marker. Sample sizes should reflect the size of the cohort and the number of first markers; samples should contain sufficient assessments from each first marker to enable moderation. Overall, the minimum sample size should be:

Cohorts of between 1 and 49 students – minimum sample size of 8 (or all if fewer than 8 in the cohort)

Cohorts of 50 to 100 students – minimum sample size of 16

Cohorts of over 100 students – to be at least 24 (determined at School/Department level)

Sample moderation must include all classifications as appropriate. The sample size for moderation must not be confused with that required for external examiners; see 6.7 below. It is

likely that samples for external examiners will contain a sub-set of the sample extracted for second marking.

- 6.6.8. **Release of marks to students:** Schools/Departments normally release Agreed Marks following moderation. However, where the relevant Head of School approves it, Provisional Marks can be released to students with a reminder that such marks are still subject to both internal and external approval. In all cases of notification of results (whether provisional or agreed) students must be reminded that marks are not confirmed until ratified by the Board of Examiners; and as such may be subject to change.
- 6.6.9. **Provision for live assessments:** This policy does not describe in detail how these procedures should operate for all cases of sampling live assessments (presentations, vivas, exhibitions, events, performance) as it is recognised that there may be situations where the procedures outlined above are not practicable. In such cases Schools/Departments and tutors are encouraged to consider a range of possible approaches to ensure the quality and standards of marking processes and where samples of live assessments cannot be recorded or marked simultaneously other means e.g. the provision of suitable artefacts, should be used to facilitate the process. Live assessments should be subject to equivalent moderation processes as those described for written assessments above.
- For all Levels, standardisation and sample moderation should be used. Normally, all live assessments will be recorded so as to facilitate further moderation and scrutiny by external examiners.
- 6.6.10. **Group Assessments** are subject to the moderation processes outlined above. Moreover, group assessment strategies must ensure that individual students are assessed against module learning outcomes and that appropriate mechanisms are in place to capture individual performance in the group context. Schools/Departments must have valid policies for the management of group working and assessment.
- 6.6.11. **Provision for work-based and work placement learning:** where work-based or work placement learning is formally included either in the programme title or as a credit rated element, then these elements should normally be subject to sample moderation where appropriate. Where International Study Abroad at another institution contributes credit to a University of Lincoln award, Schools/Departments must determine appropriate quality assurance at validation; where second marking is not practicable.

6.7. The role of the External Examiner

External Examiners must be sent adequate samples of students' work. The samples will cover all modules under the External Examiner's remit and must reflect:

- a representative range of work, sufficient to make a judgement. The sample sent must include evidence of second and double marking as appropriate. Representative samples may inevitably include work which has been single marked and samples for External Examiners are likely to vary from those extracted for initial double marking
- all summative assessment elements within each module
- all centres where students have taken the module
- all cohorts where modules are taught on programmes with multiple intakes in a given academic year

Sample sizes for External Examiner scrutiny must meet or exceed the minimum prescribed in 6.6.7. External Examiners can call for additional samples of student work to assist their deliberations. They are encouraged to have a dialogue with internal assessors to understand assessment strategy and marks/grades awarded. To assist this process, complete marks lists, and copies of the documentation for all assessments should accompany the samples of work together with appropriate evidence associated with the moderation process⁴. Module leaders are required to prepare a report in addition to the artefacts; this report must be presented to Subject Boards of

⁴ The Moderation Overview form or locally approved equivalent

Examiners. Each School/Department should either use the standard University Subject Board Module Report template or equivalent⁵ to ensure consistency across modules and programmes.

External Examiners are not empowered to change an individual student's mark unless they have reviewed the entire cohort's work. They can advise module co-ordinators and programme teams on the marks awarded, and, based on the samples of work and in agreement with the module co-ordinator, raise or lower all marks on an assessment or a module by a constant factor (arithmetic).

External Examiners may present any comments they have on the work and marking they have sampled to the Board of Examiners, and in their annual report.

In the case of multiple intakes, Schools and Departments must ensure that moderation processes remain robust, that external examiners can sample each intake and that module leaders report on each intake.

A summary of the requirements for double and second marking, internal moderation and External Examiner scrutiny requirements for different programme types and levels is presented in Appendix 5.

Where External Examiners are either absent or notify a School at short notice of either an unwillingness or inability to complete external verification of student work prior to the Subject Board of Examiners, Heads of School should seek approval from their College Director of Academic Quality & Standards, or in their absence Chair of AAC, to suspend or adjust any University protocols including regulations and terms of reference of Boards of Examiners to allow for necessary business to be progressed. The intent would be to allow sufficient flexibility to enable reassessment or completion of credit in the interest of student progression or completion, particularly finalists. Such measures are only likely to be necessary in exceptional circumstances, must be consistent with programme learning outcomes and compliant with requirements of accrediting bodies. Appropriate temporary measures and adjustments to process, which maintain standards and compliance with quality assurance principals, must be noted at the appropriate Subject Board of Examiners.

It is envisaged that in the first instance, Heads of School will seek to substitute absent External Examiners with other External Examiners from cognate programmes or subjects within the College. Where this proves to be impossible, then internal Senior Academics with relevant subject qualifications and recent external examining experience maybe used as a last resort; but only where they are not contributing to modules being ratified. Moreover, such adjustment to quality assurance processes must only be utilised where a delay in Examination Board decision-making would be of significant detriment to student outcomes.

⁵ To be sanctioned by the College Director of Academic Quality & Standards

Appendix 1 Assessment and Grading of Higher National Programmes

Grading of individual assessment items on Higher National awards

Mark	Descriptor	Higher National Grade
0-39	Unsatisfactory	Fail (or Refer where regulations permit)
40-49	Satisfactory	Pass
50-59	Threshold Merit Standard	Merit
60-69	Good Merit Standard	Merit
70-99	Excellent	Distinction

Appendix 2: Undergraduate Grading Descriptors

Knowledge and understanding

Fail (0-29)	Marginal Fail (30-39)	3rd class (40-49)	2:2 (50-59)	2:1 (60-69)	1st (70-84)	1st (85-100)
The student's knowledge and understanding of the subject is inadequate, without the required breadth or depth, with deficiencies in key areas.	The student's knowledge and understanding is below the threshold standard and insufficient to deal with some key aspects of the subject.	The student has demonstrated a depth of knowledge and understanding in key aspects of their field of study, sufficient to deal with terminology, facts and concepts.	The student has demonstrated a sound breadth and depth of subject knowledge and understanding, which are sometimes balanced towards the descriptive rather than the critical or analytical.	The student has demonstrated sophisticated breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, showing a clear, critical insight.	The student has shown excellent knowledge and understanding, well beyond the threshold expectation of a graduate at this level and beyond what has been taught.	The student has shown exceptional knowledge and understanding, well beyond the threshold expectation of a graduate at this level and significantly beyond what has been taught.
The student has demonstrated inadequate understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles, including their limitations and ambiguities.	The student has demonstrated some understanding of some subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles, but insufficient to reach the threshold standard	The student has demonstrated an understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles.	The student has consistently demonstrated an understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles as well as more specialised areas.	The student has demonstrated a thorough understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles and a sound understanding of more specialised areas.	The student has demonstrated an excellent understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles, and in-depth knowledge, if not mastery of a range of specialised areas.	The student has demonstrated exceptional understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles, and a mastery of knowledge in range of specialised areas.
The student has not produced sufficient evidence of background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study.	There are some deficiencies in some areas of investigation, analysis, enquiry and/or study.	The student has conducted general background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study using established techniques, with the ability to extract relevant points.	The student has conducted background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study using established techniques accurately, and can critically appraise academic sources.	The student has conducted thorough background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study using established techniques accurately, and possesses a well-developed ability to critically appraise a wide range of sources.	The student has conducted independent, extensive and appropriate investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study well beyond the usual range, together with critical evaluation, to advance work and/or direct arguments.	The student has conducted independent, extensive and appropriate investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study which significantly exceeds the usual range, together with critical evaluation, to advance work and direct arguments.

Cognitive skills

Fail (0-29)	Marginal Fail (30-39)	3rd class (40-49)	2:2 (50-59)	2:1 (60-69)	1st (70-84)	1st (85-100)
The student has displayed an over-reliance on set sources. They have not demonstrated an adequate ability to select and evaluate reading and research.	The student has displayed an over-reliance on a set of sources or texts. There are some deficiencies in the selection and evaluation of source material.	The student has demonstrated the ability to select, evaluate and comment on reading, research and primary sources.	The student has selected, evaluated and commented on reading, research and primary sources, sometimes beyond the set range.	The student has thoroughly selected, critically evaluated and commented on reading, research and primary sources, usually beyond the set range.	The student has demonstrated an excellent ability to select, consider, evaluate, comment on and synthesise a broad range of research, primary sources, views and information and integrate references.	The student has demonstrated an exceptional ability to select, consider, evaluate, comment on and synthesise an extensive range of research, primary sources, views and information and integrate references.
The student's arguments and explanations are weak and/or poorly constructed, and they are not able to critically evaluate the arguments of others or consider alternative views.	The student can provide explanations, but their argument is neither sustained nor sufficiently aware of alternative views.	The student has shown the ability to devise and sustain an argument, with some consideration of alternative views and can explain often complex matters and ideas.	The student has argued logically, with supporting evidence, and has demonstrated the ability to consider and evaluate a range of views and information. They have clearly and consistently explained complex matters and ideas.	The student has demonstrated the ability to make coherent, substantiated arguments, as well as the ability to consider, critically evaluate and synthesise a range of views and information. They have demonstrated a thorough, perceptive and thoughtful interpretation of complex matters and ideas.	The student has made consistent, logical, coherently developed, and substantiated arguments, and demonstrated the ability to systematically consider, critically evaluate and synthesise a wide range of views and information. They have demonstrated sophisticated perception, critical insight and interpretation of complex matters and ideas.	The student has made consistent, logical, coherently developed, and substantiated arguments, and demonstrated the ability to systematically consider, critically evaluate and synthesise a comprehensive range of views and information. They have demonstrated sophisticated perception, critical insight and interpretation of complex matters and ideas in all aspects of the work.
The student has shown a limited ability to solve problems and/or make decisions.	The student has demonstrated some problem solving ability, applying a limited range of methods to decision-making in less complex and predictable circumstances.	The student has demonstrated an ability to solve problems, applying a range of methods to do so, and the ability to make decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances.	The student has consistently solved complex problems, selecting and applying a range of appropriate methods, and can make decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances.	The student has demonstrated thorough problem-solving skills, selecting and justifying their use of a wide-range of methods, and can make decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances with a degree of autonomy.	The student has demonstrated a wide range of extremely well-developed problem-solving skills, as well as a strong aptitude for decision-making with a high degree of autonomy, in the most complex and unpredictable circumstances.	The student has demonstrated extremely well-developed problem-solving skills in all areas, as well as an exemplary aptitude for decision-making with a high degree of autonomy, in the most complex and unpredictable circumstances.

The student has shown no real creativity.	The student has shown limited creativity.	The student has produced creative work.	The student has consistently demonstrated creativity.	The student shows a high level of creativity and originality throughout their work.	The student possesses excellent creative flair and originality.	The student possesses excellent creative flair and originality in all aspects of the assessment.
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Practical skills

Fail (0-29)	Marginal Fail (30-39)	3rd class (40-49)	2:2 (50-59)	2:1 (60-69)	1st (70-84)	1st (85-100)
The student has demonstrated very limited evidence of skills development or application.	The student demonstrated insufficient evidence of developing and applying specialist skills.	The student has demonstrated evidence of developing and applying specialist skills.	The student has consistently demonstrated the development and informed application of specialist skills.	The student has demonstrated capable and confident performance/demonstration of specialist skills.	The student has demonstrated an accomplished and innovative application of specialist skills.	The student has demonstrated an accomplished and highly innovative application of specialist skills in all aspects of the assessment.
The student has attempted practical tasks/processes but followed a limited, procedural or mechanistic formula, and they contain errors, with little or no independence.	The student has completed some practical tasks and/or processes accurately but with limited confidence and insufficient independence.	The student has completed practical tasks and/or processes accurately and with a degree of confidence and independence.	The student has consistently completed practical tasks/processes mainly independently in an accurate, well-coordinated and proficient way.	The student has performed practical tasks and/or processes autonomously, with accuracy and coordination.	The student has autonomously completed practical tasks and/or processes with a high degree of accuracy, coordination and proficiency.	The student has autonomously completed practical tasks and processes with a high degree of accuracy, coordination and proficiency in all stages of the development and completion of the assessment.
The student has demonstrated a lack of technical and/or artistic skills in most, or key, areas.	The student has demonstrated some technical and/or artistic skills but there are some deficiencies.	The student has demonstrated technical and/or artistic skills.	The student has consistently demonstrated well-developed technical and/or artistic skills.	The student has a thorough command of highly-developed relevant technical/artistic skills.	The student has a full range of excellent technical/artistic skills.	The student has a full range of exceptional technical/artistic skills.
The student has not presented their research findings clearly or effectively, and their gathering, processing and interpretation of data is unsatisfactory.	The student has not presented their research findings sufficiently clearly or effectively, and their gathering, processing and interpretation of data is not sufficiently effective.	The student has presented their research findings, in several formats, and has gathered, processed and interpreted data effectively.	The student has consistently presented their research findings effectively and appropriately in many formats, and has gathered, processed and interpreted data efficiently and effectively.	The student has presented thorough research findings perceptively and appropriately in a wide range of formats, and has gathered, processed and interpreted a wide range of complex data efficiently and effectively.	The student has presented research findings perceptively, convincingly and appropriately in a wide range of formats, and has gathered, processed and interpreted a wide range of complex data efficiently and effectively.	The student has presented research findings perceptively, convincingly and professionally in a wide range of formats, and has gathered, processed and interpreted a comprehensive range of complex data efficiently and effectively.

Transferable skills

Fail (0-29)	Marginal Fail (30-39)	3rd class (40-49)	2:2 (50-59)	2:1 (60-69)	1st (70-84)	1st (85-100)
The student is not able to sufficiently express ideas and convey clear meaning verbally, electronically and/or in writing, uses inaccurate terminology, with many errors in spelling, vocabulary and syntax.	The student has demonstrated some ability to communicate information, ideas and problems but with insufficient accuracy, clarity of expression or proficiency.	The student can communicate information, ideas, problems, with clear expression and style. They have also demonstrated appropriate transferable skills. Communication skills meet threshold standard	The student can consistently and confidently communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions. They show a clear, coherent, expressive style, with a range of vocabulary. They have consistently demonstrated strong transferable skills.	The student can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions with a high-degree of proficiency. They have a clear, fluent and expressive style with appropriate vocabulary. They have a high standard of transferable skills.	The student can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to an accomplished level. They have shown an accurate, fluent, sophisticated style. They possess excellent transferable skills.	The student can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to a highly accomplished level. They have shown an accurate, fluent, sophisticated style and possess excellent transferable skills in every aspect of the assessment.
The student has made no or limited contributions to group discussions and/or project work.	The student has made infrequent contributions to group discussions and/or project work.	The student has made useful contributions to group discussions and/or project work.	The student consistently makes coherent and constructive contributions to group discussions and/or project work.	The student makes strong, valuable contributions to group discussions and/or project work, with an understanding of team and leadership roles.	The student makes clear, authoritative and valuable contributions to group discussions and/or project work, with excellent teamwork and leadership skills.	The student makes clear, authoritative and valuable contributions to group discussions and/or project work, with exceptional teamwork and leadership skills.
The student has demonstrated little or no ability to manage their learning and/or work without supervision.	The student has demonstrated limited ability to manage their learning and/or work without supervision.	The student has shown an ability to manage their learning and work with minimal or no supervision.	The student has consistently shown an ability to systematically manage their learning, and work without supervision.	The student has shown a strong ability to systematically manage their learning, and work without supervision.	The student has shown an excellent ability to manage their learning on their own initiative, and work without supervision.	The student has shown an exceptional ability to manage their learning on their own initiative, and work without supervision.
The student has not demonstrated adequate initiative or personal responsibility.	The student has not demonstrated adequate initiative or personal responsibility.	The student has demonstrated initiative and personal responsibility.	The student has consistently demonstrated initiative and personal responsibility.	The student has consistently demonstrated well-developed initiative and personal responsibility.	The student has demonstrated excellent initiative and personal responsibility.	The student has demonstrated exceptional initiative and personal responsibility.
The student has shown little or no ability to reflect on their work.	The student has shown little or no ability to reflect on their work.	The student has demonstrated the ability to reflect on their work.	The student has consistently demonstrated a well-developed ability to reflect on their work.	The student has demonstrated the ability to reflect critically on their work.	The student has demonstrated an excellent ability to reflect critically and independently on their work.	The student has demonstrated an exceptional ability to reflect critically and independently on their work.

Note that in certain circumstances a marginal fail may be condonable under University regulations

Professional competences (as expressed by programme learning outcomes)

For some programmes with specific professional competences or industrial practice requirements that are embedded within programme learning outcomes, the identification of appropriate competence is typically articulated by the use of pass/fail criteria, however in some circumstances the range of grades from 3rd class through to 1st class may be used, but in all cases such grades infer either:

that the student has demonstrated achievement of professional competence when assessed against the requirements of a PSRB

OR

that the student has adhered to the appropriate rules and/or conventions set by regulators or recognised requirements of the industry

Failure to achieve the required standard of competence must result in the award of a failing grade.

Appendix 3: Postgraduate Classification Descriptors

Knowledge & Understanding

Fail 0-39	Marginal Fail 40-49	Pass 50-59	Merit 60-69	Distinction 70-85	Distinction 85+
Typically, demonstrates little knowledge of the field, with significant weaknesses in the knowledge base, and/or simply reproduces knowledge without evidence of understanding. Shows little or no critical ability. Poor, inconsistent analysis.	Typically, demonstrates limited knowledge of the field and some awareness of current evidence and issues, but with some notable weaknesses. Lacks knowledge and understanding of some key areas. Offers some appropriate analysis, but with some significant inconsistencies which affect the soundness of argument and/or conclusions. Demonstrates very limited critical ability	Generally demonstrates a sound knowledge and understanding of material within a specialised field. Demonstrates an understanding of current theoretical and methodological approaches and how these affect the way the knowledge base is interpreted. Provides evidence of relevant and sound analysis within the specialised area, with some critical evaluation. Is able to analyse complex issues and make appropriate judgements.	Produces work with a well-defined focus. Demonstrates a systematic knowledge, understanding and critical awareness of current problems/professional practice, academic debate and/or contemporary discourse. Is able to evaluate critically and to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, making sound judgements in the absence of complete data.	Produces work of exceptional standard, reflecting excellent understanding. Displays mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills, with notable critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights at forefront of field. Shows excellent ability to evaluate knowledge critically and, where appropriate, to propose new avenues for research. Deals with complex issues systematically and creatively, making excellent judgements	This work meets and often exceeds the standard for distinction, as described in the 70-85 band, across all subcategories of criteria. Typically, the work is of such a quality that indicates a student capable of doctoral research in the discipline and, in principle, has potential for publication or exhibition with further refinement as appropriate. Reflects critically on own positionality, nature and status of knowledge with discipline.

Cognitive Skills

Fail 0-39	Marginal Fail 40-49	Pass 50-59	Merit 60-69	Distinction 70-85	Distinction 85+
Likely to make unsubstantiated generalizations, made without use of any credible evidence. Lack of logic, leading to unsupportable/missing conclusions. Lack of any attempt to analyse, synthesise or evaluate. Poor communication of ideas.	Some evidence of analytical intellectual skills, but for the most part descriptive. Ideas/findings sometimes illogical and contradictory. Generalized statements made with scant evidence. Conclusions lack relevance.	Evidence of some logical, analytical thinking and synthesis. Can analyse new and/or abstract data and situations without guidance. An emerging awareness of different stances and ability to use evidence to support the argument. Valid conclusions	Sound, logical, analytical thinking; synthesis and evaluation. Ability to devise and sustain persuasive arguments, and to review the reliability, validity & significance of evidence. Ability to communicate ideas and evidence accurately and convincingly. Sound, convincing conclusions.	Thoroughly logical work, supported by judiciously selected and evaluated evidence. High quality analysis, developed independently or through effective collaboration. Ability to investigate contradictory information and identify reasons for contradictions. Strong conclusions.	Exceptional work; judiciously selected and evaluated evidence. Very high quality analysis, developed independently or through effective collaboration. Ability to investigate contradictory information and identify reasons for contradictions. Highly persuasive conclusions.

Practical Skills

Fail 0-39	Marginal Fail 40-49	Pass 50-59	Merit 60-69	Distinction 70-85	Distinction 85+
<p>Typically, little or no skill demonstrated in relevant techniques applicable to own practise, research, professional practice or advanced scholarship. Lacks any understanding of how established techniques and/or methods of enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge. Fails to evidence or discuss/apply appropriate examples of literature relating to current research and advanced scholarship in the field. References to literature/ evidence and use of academic conventions are flawed/irrelevant.</p>	<p>Typically demonstrates some skill in selected techniques and/or approaches applicable to own practise, research or advanced scholarship, but with significant areas of weakness. Can evidence and discuss/apply examples of literature relating to current research but lacks critical engagement. References to appropriate literature/ evidence and use of academic conventions are insufficient and/or inconsistent. Lacks sufficient understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge.</p>	<p>Demonstrates understanding of and skills in selected techniques/ approaches applicable to own practise, research or advanced scholarship. Shows understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline. Can evaluate critically examples of literature relating to current research and advanced scholarship in the field. Makes consistently sound use of appropriate academic conventions and academic honesty.</p>	<p>Displays a comprehensive understanding of and skills in techniques/approaches applicable to own practise, research or advanced scholarship. Shows some originality in the application of knowledge, and a good understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline. Is able to evaluate critically a range of sources relating to current practice and advanced scholarship in the discipline. Makes consistently good use of appropriate academic conventions and academic honesty.</p>	<p>Highly effective and appropriate use of technical, research and/or professional skill. Displays exceptional grasp of a range of techniques applicable to own practice, research or advanced scholarship. Shows originality in application of knowledge, and excellent grasp of how knowledge is created and interpreted in the discipline. Is able to evaluate critically, with notable insight, a range of sources relating to current practice, research and advanced scholarship in the discipline. Makes consistently excellent use of appropriate academic conventions and academic honesty.</p>	

Transferable Skills

Fail 0-39	Marginal Fail 40-49	Pass 50-59	Merit 60-69	Distinction 70-85	Distinction 85+
<p>Typically significant weaknesses evident in transferable skills which could include such as digital literacy, communication, problem-solving and project management. Inability to adapt. Inability to work flexibly, independently and/or as part of a team.</p>	<p>Typically demonstrates some effective transferable skills, which could include communication and problem-solving, but with some problematic areas of weakness. Limited ability to adapt. Ability to work flexibly, independently and/or as part of a team, but with areas of weakness.</p>	<p>Typically a consistent competency in transferable skills, which may include team working, project management, digital literacy, creativity and flexibility. Demonstrates capabilities to support effective communication in a range of complex and specialised contexts. Shows consistent ability in tackling and solving demanding problems. Can plan and direct own learning. Demonstrates ability to advance own knowledge and skills. Demonstrates the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.</p>	<p>Shows a high level of competence in transferable skills, including team working, project management, digital literacy, creativity and flexibility. Demonstrates very effective communication in a range of complex and specialised contexts. Demonstrates self-direction in tackling and solving demanding problems. Can act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level. Demonstrates attitudes needed to advance own knowledge, understanding, and skills. Demonstrates the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.</p>	<p>Shows a very high level of competence in transferable skills, including team working/leadership, project management, digital literacies and practices, creativity and flexibility. Demonstrates very high-level communication skills in a range of complex contexts, and ability to write at publishable standard. Demonstrates autonomy and notable originality in tackling and solving demanding problems. Shows a high level of consistency and autonomy in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level. Demonstrates the skills and attitudes needed to advance own knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level. Demonstrates the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.</p>	

Appendix 4: Assessment Checklist

Assessment Design Considerations:

1. The proposed assessment addresses the learning outcomes as described in the formal module and programme specifications.
2. The proposed assessment is appropriate for the measurement of the attainment of the knowledge and skills associated with the learning outcome(s) being addressed.
3. The proposed assessment is part of a set of assessments that enable students to demonstrate attainment of all learning outcomes in the module.

Assessment Production Considerations:

4. The documentation associated with your assessment is consistent with APMS specification and has been approved by the preceding Subject Board of Examiners.
5. The documentation associated with your assessment has been completed prior to commencement of teaching for the module.
6. The documentation associated with your assessment contains a set of assessment criteria, which describe the requirements and expectations of the given task and makes clear what the student needs to do to demonstrate the learning outcomes.
7. The documentation associated with your assessment includes reference to the expected performance requirements for the assessment and responds to the University Award Classification Descriptors.
8. The documentation associated with your assessment clearly identifies the learning outcome coverage of the assessment and the weighting of the assessment in relation to the overall module assessment strategy.

Assessment Marking and Moderation Considerations:

9. The expected performance statements and assessment criteria form the basis for marking the work after submission.
10. If your assessment is to be marked numerically, it has been designed to ensure assessors have a full range of marks available in whole numbers from 0-100.
11. The moderation of your assessment has been planned and will be carried out according to University policy, with all assessors, including second and double markers as appropriate, identified prior to submission by students.
12. The moderation of your assessment and the agreement of standards is clearly described and documented for ease of both internal and external scrutiny.
13. Your assessment marking and feedback processes are planned and coordinated to ensure a 15 working day turnaround as required by University policy.
14. When releasing assessment results to students, it is made clear that marks/grades are provisional and subject to both internal and external scrutiny and ratification by the Board of Examiners and that as such marks may be subject to change.
15. Moderation duties are allocated by Heads of School/Department prior to commencement of teaching

Assessment Scrutiny Considerations:

16. Examination papers and mark schemes have been subject to internal peer review and external examiner approval prior to commencement of module teaching.
17. Assessment documentation has been produced in a timely fashion to ensure appropriate internal and external scrutiny and verification prior to presentation to students.

18. An adequate sample of student work is made available to the appropriate external examiner and this sample is representative of all cohorts, all centres and all assessment elements within the module.

Appendix 5: Summary of Double and Second Marking, Internal Moderation and External Examiner scrutiny.

Programme type	Internal Moderation	Second marking	Double marking	External Examiner scrutiny
Taught Doctorate	The marking of all modules, regardless of level of assessment should be moderated.	Samples of all D Level must be second marked. All fails should be second marked.		A representative range of work, across the entire mark range and covering all areas under the Examiner's remit, sufficient to make a judgement. It should include examples of second marking.
Taught Masters	The marking of all modules, regardless of level of assessment should be moderated.	Samples of all M Level must be second marked. All fails should be second marked.	The dissertation or project component shall be double marked by at least two members of staff, one of whom shall be the dissertation or project supervisor. Exceptionally a Board of Examiners may agree that second marking replaces double marking	A representative range of work, across the entire mark range and covering all units under the Examiner's remit, sufficient to make a judgement. It should include examples of second marking. A sample of dissertations, projects or equivalent independently supervised work at postgraduate level would normally be externally moderated. For small programmes this would be all such work
Undergraduate degrees	The marking of all modules, regardless of level of assessment should be moderated.	Sample of work at all levels must be second marked. All fails should be second marked.	All dissertations, projects or equivalent independently supervised work must be double marked. Exceptionally a Board of Examiners may agree that second marking replaces double marking	A representative range of work, across all classification bands and covering all units/modules under the Examiner's remit, sufficient to make a judgement. It should include examples of double and second marking.
Foundation Degrees	The marking of all modules, regardless of level of assessment should be moderated.	Samples of work at all Levels work must be second marked. All fails should be second marked.	All dissertations, projects or equivalent independently supervised work must be double marked.	A representative range of work, across the entire mark range and covering all units under the Examiner's remit at both levels 1 and 2, sufficient to make a judgement. It should include examples of double and second marking.
HND/HNCs	The marking of all modules, regardless of level of assessment should be moderated.	Samples of work at all Levels must be second marked. All fails should be second marked.	All dissertations, projects or equivalent independently supervised work must be double marked.	A representative range of work, across the entire mark range and covering all units under the Examiner's remit at both levels 1 and 2, sufficient to make a judgement. It should include examples of double and second marking.
Short courses	The marking of all modules, regardless of level of assessment should be moderated.	Samples of work at all Levels must be second marked. All fails should be second marked.		A representative range of work, across the entire mark range and covering all units under the Examiner's remit, sufficient to make a judgement. It should include examples second marking as appropriate.