

9.2 Policy on the Quality Assurance of examination and assessment

Outline of Policy

1 The overall purposes of Education for Health's quality assurance mechanisms within the examinations and assessment process are:

- to guarantee that Module and Programme team apply the agreed marking criteria appropriately;
- to guarantee that Education for Health maintains an overall consistency of standards across the various modules;
- to protect candidates against bias, conscious or otherwise, on the part of examiners

Education for Health's policy is therefore to have robust mechanisms for marking and for the moderation of marks. The role of the external examiner is especially significant in assuring the quality of the assessment process, in respect of the standards of the awards made and the integrity of the assessment process. The following additional mechanisms must also be used:

Anonymous marking of all summative assessments; Anonymous marking is an important element in Education for Health's strategy for the quality assurance of the assessment process. The rationale for anonymity is the protection of candidates against the possibility of bias in assessment

Use of a mark proforma; A mark proforma is a separate sheet on which the mark itself and the rationale for the mark awarded are recorded. The proforma should:

- reflect the agreed level descriptors and assessment criteria for the work concerned;
- include a brief statement by the marker of the rationale for the mark awarded (consistent with the assessment criteria);

In addition, it may be considered appropriate to use double marking as an additional quality assurance mechanism.

General principles

Double marking is not only a means of assuring the quality of the assessment process but is also valued as a way for examiners to learn and apply consistent standards, and of attempting to resolve problematic cases.

There is no requirement that double marking must be blind or unseen (where the first marker's marks and the rationale for them are not communicated to the second marker until after s/he has completed his/her marking), although this is permitted.

Double marking may be applied to all scripts in a cohort, or to a sample of scripts to moderate the work of the first marker.

Wherever double marking is used there should be a clear 'audit trail' showing the rationale for the mark reached by each marker, and communication between them to reach an agreed mark.

The following procedure for resolving disagreements between first and second markers should be followed as outlined below:

- a discrepancy of <10% in the mark for the assessed element which does not span a classification border is to be resolved by taking the average of the two marks;
- a discrepancy of >10% in the mark for the assessed element or spanning a classification border is to be resolved by discussion between the markers to reach an agreed mark if possible;
- if agreement cannot be achieved refer to the external examiner.

Marking of resubmissions

Resubmissions can be marked by either the marker who marked the original submission or by another suitably experienced marker.

Markers will mark the resubmission on its merits (i.e. as a new submission) but will be given access to the any previous submissions to enable him/her to review feedback.

Moderation of marks

It is our policy to require only a sample of examination scripts or assignments to be moderated. The extent of the sample required is discussed below.

For all examination scripts and summatively assessed coursework, the top, middle and bottom marked submissions as well as any borderline (within 2% of the minimum pass mark) and all fail papers will be moderated.

If moderation reveals a pattern of inconsistent or over-harsh or over-generous marking then steps must be taken to review the full cohort of marks for that assignment / script. These may involve the double marking of all the work and/or increasing or reducing the marks awarded to all the candidates concerned in a systematic fashion whose rationale and procedure are recorded with the work affected, agreed with the external examiner(s) concerned. Marks for individual assignments / scripts must not be altered otherwise.

Assessment reviewed for the purposes of moderation does not need to be anonymised.