



## **ARDEN UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 20 GUIDELINES FOR MODERATORS**

Moderation is a key element of the assessment process. It provides an opportunity for the peer review of grades to provide an alternative judgment on the appropriateness and consistency of marking and on whether the feedback provided is consistent with the grade and meets Arden University's requirements about providing students with a development opportunity. Moderators should not seek to substitute their views for those of the first marker but should focus on whether grades awarded are reasonable, recognising that there may be small differences of opinion between colleagues. The following guidelines provide further guidance.

### **MODERATING GUIDELINES**

1. The key boundaries for the postgraduate modules are 45% (where compensation may be awarded), 50% (pass mark) and 70% (distinction). For undergraduate courses they are 35% in respect of compensation and then at the conventional classification boundaries. Markers have been asked to avoid grades of 34% for undergraduate courses and 44% for postgraduate courses. Unless there has been some form of 'arithmetical error', individual marks should not be changed. The interpretation applied here to arithmetical error, refers to the incorrect addition or omission of marks. It is conceivable that this can take place even where an assessment comprises of a single question, for example, where the marker makes an error when finalising the mark based on the assessment criteria.

### **MODERATING WHERE THERE IS ONLY ONE FIRST MARKER**

2. Where the sample moderated has been marked consistently but there is disagreement in terms of where the work 'sits' (scaling) in relation to the entire sample a discussion should take place between the marker and the moderator. Where a consensus can be reached, this should be recorded on isystem. These changes apply to the all marks and not just the sample. Where agreement cannot be reached, the Head of School should be informed and will guide the marker and moderator to a resolution.
3. Where the sample moderated has been marked consistently but there is disagreement about where the work 'sits' (scaling) in relation to one of the boundaries a discussion should take place between the marker and the moderator. Where a consensus can be reached,



this should be recorded on isystem. These changes apply to the all marks and not just the sample. Where agreement cannot be reached, the Head of School should be informed and will guide the marker and moderator to a resolution.

4. Where a significant difference to a student's assessment is identified, which is the result of an arithmetical error, a discussion should take place between the marker and the moderator. Where a consensus can be reached, this should be recorded along with the details on isystem. In cases of arithmetical error, it is good practice to consider checking all scripts. Where agreement cannot be reached, the Head of School should be informed and will guide the marker and moderator to a resolution.
5. Where an entire set of assessments appears not to have been marked consistently, a discussion should take place between the marker and the moderator. The Head of School should also be informed. It is likely that all affected work will need to be remarked.

#### MODERATING ACROSS MORE THAN ONE FIRST MARKER

6. A mean mark and standard deviation should be calculated for each 'first marker' group and included in the relevant column on the module moderation report.
7. Where mean mark variances between first marker groups are higher than +/-5% the moderator should firstly consider whether differences have arisen due to different characteristics of the two or more groups (e.g. students at a study centre and DL students etc). If the variance cannot be accounted for by the characteristics of the group, that is the moderator is satisfied that comparable work is not receiving a similar mark, then scaling may be considered. Within this decision mix, the standard deviation between tutor groups should also be scrutinised to compare the relative spread of marks.
8. If considering scaling, attention needs to be paid to any boundary changes. Assessments reclassified due to a boundary change must be moderated, if this has not already taken place within the original moderation process. When considering scaling and where a consensus can be reached between the moderator and the first marker(s), this should be recorded, along with the details on isystem. These changes apply to the all marks for a given tutor group and not just the sample. Where agreement cannot be reached, the Head of School should be informed.

#### COMPLETING THE MARK SHEET FOR THE MODERATOR



9. When moderating an individual assessment, a comment should be made. This should not simply be 'mark agreed' but should summarise in a brief sentence or phrase the work.