

# Academic Policy and Procedures



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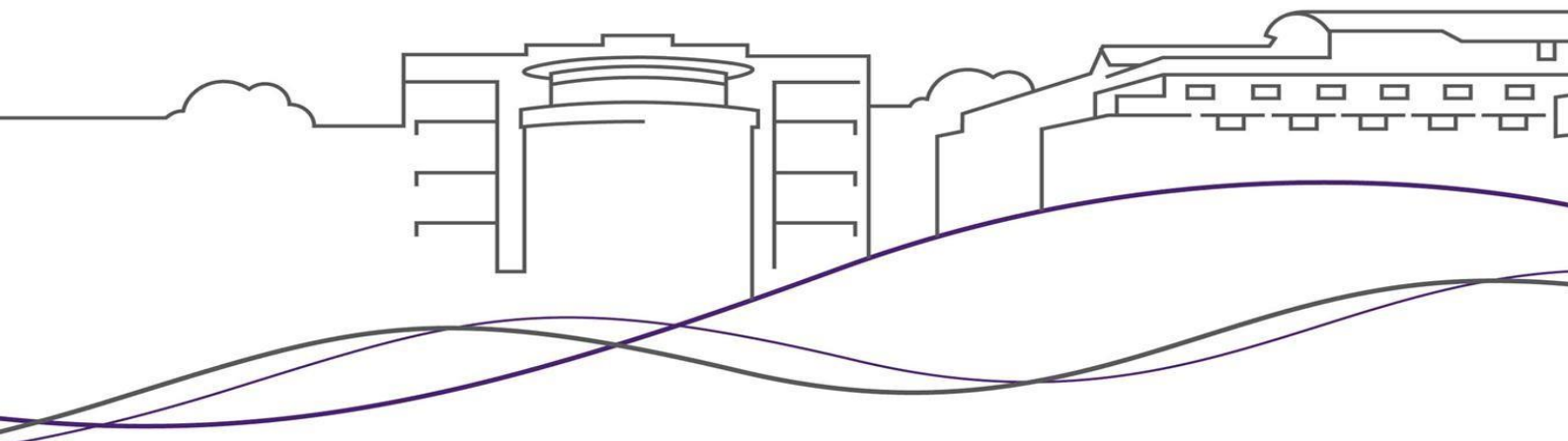
 South Devon College

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

## **MARKING AND MODERATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE v7.0**

For UCSD Degrees only

For UoP Degrees please following this [link](#)



## Document Control

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7.0	May 2024	K Jones	Review to reflect new ownership

### APPROVAL

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## Introduction

The College's assessment principles are described in the Assessment Policy, with further practice guidance for available to students and staff on the UCSD website <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/student-life/support/assessment-guidance/> This policy should be read in conjunction with these documents.

Reliability is a core principle for assessment. This means that the outcomes of assessment for a student should be fair and justifiable. It assumes that if the marking process is repeated, a student can expect to receive a similar result. We know this is difficult to ensure when dealing with large numbers of markers and a diverse student body and so, the policy for marking and moderation is designed to ensure that each student's work is considered appropriately, and to minimise the possibility of unfair outcomes for students. It also protects and supports the staff who are responsible for making judgments about the quality of student work. Finally it is a way of ensuring and maintaining academic standards in the College.

## Principles of Marking and Moderation

The minimum standard which all College's programmes must adopt is that all assessed work which contributes to a final award should be subject to an element of independent internal scrutiny. This scrutiny seeks to contribute to consistency in marking standards and practices across a subject area and programme, and to provide written feedback on how this can be achieved.

**Marking** is a process indivisible from assessment and embedded within particular disciplines, therefore the marking process for any particular piece of student work needs to be understood within that context. Some assessments can be benchmarked to an established set of marking criteria, or 'correct' or 'model' answers. Some assessments require objective marking of a student's performance through the academic and/or professional judgment of student performance against broad marking criteria.

**Moderation** is the process which should make sure that the marking of assessments is fair, reliable and is consistent with the marking criteria.

## Assessment briefs and guidance

All assessments must be accompanied by explicit assessment guidance including information about the assessment task, learning outcomes to be assessed, assessment criteria which indicate the standards required, marking and grading

criteria for different categories of pass marks and details of tutorial or other support. The assessment guidance and briefing sheets should be accessible to all students and staff normally through programme and/or module handbooks, and the digital learning environment.

### Marking criteria

It is the responsibility of the module leader to identify that the marking criteria for a particular assessment are appropriate, and to ensure that the criteria are accurate, transparent, and available to markers in a timely fashion. Marking and grading criteria should be available to all students and staff and external examiners.

### Anonymous marking

Anonymous marking is defined where an assessment or examination is assessed without the student's name or identity being made known to the marker, moderator or external examiner. Anonymous marking avoids the risk of bias entering the assessment process and endeavours to make sure all students are treated equally.

Wherever possible, assessments will be marked anonymously. There are necessary exceptions to anonymity where assessment elements include performance, practical work, presentations, fieldwork, placements, clinical skills and in some team or group assessments.

### Pass rounding up of marks

It is vital that within a module "rounding up" only happens once in the final calculation of a module mark. Element marks are never rounded up in advance.

The following will be rounded up to pass standard

- Level 4 and 5 39.5% at module level

### Internal moderation

Moderation involves a review of assessments within a module by an appropriate member of academic staff. The internal moderation process will sample assessments to satisfy the moderator that there is consistency and fairness, sampling a minimum of 10 assessments in small modules.

Selection of assessments for moderation should ensure there is a representative sample of

- assessments from all elements of the module
- assessments that are marked as a grading boundary borderline
- any assessment that has been graded as failing (less than 40%).

Moderators should pay particular attention to, and **may** need to sample further where for example there are

- new modules
- assessments are taught or assessed by staff new to South Devon College.

Internal moderation should follow the process set out below and be recorded on the Module Assessment Moderation form (available on the HE Hub). Once the module is finished and all moderation has been completed, the Module Leader is responsible for checking that they have responded to the feedback on the form and uploading the Moderation form to the External Examiner block on Moodle.

## Process

In undertaking the process moderators should ask three broad questions:

1. Are the marks awarded justified by comments made on the assessment? For example, if the marker has written 'excellent', 'outstanding' and 'insightful' but awarded a mark of 72%, this may indicate under-marking at the top end.
2. Has there been use of the full mark range? The moderation process should for example, guard against the bunching of grades in one classification or under-utilisation of the top range of grades.
3. Is there broad agreement that the marks awarded are justifiable? Outcomes of moderation

The moderator may decide to:

- confirm all marks;
- raise or lower all marks;
- move a boundary (e.g. put all high 2:2s into the 2:1 classification);
- make an adjustment to a particular class of marks (e.g. raise all First class marks, lower all Third class marks).

Where there are discrepancies evident in the case of multiple markers, adjustment to all marks awarded by a marker is permissible.

Moderators should make comments on individual pieces of assessment, and overall comments on the sample, the marking and any recommended changes. All changes recommended must be recorded. When a moderator has concerns they will have a conversation with the module leader and may suggest a review and revision of marks. Where there are discrepancies evident in the case of multiple markers, adjustment to all marks awarded by a marker is permissible.

It should be made clear on each assessment that it has been moderated, by whom and the date. Typically, this would be a should statement at the bottom of Turnitin narrative feedback, e.g. 'Moderated by A. Teacher, 10/11/23'. Records should also be kept by the Programme Leader about which students have been moderated across an academic level of study to ensure all students are moderate evenly.

If, following discussions, the module leader or moderator has concerns about the process, this should be raised with the Section Head, who may arrange for further moderation or marking.

All moderation activities should be recorded with marker's, module leader's and moderator's comments. These will be available to external examiners, and at subject assessment panels.

### **Agreeing marks**

The moderator will often share the same view on the work they have seen and agree the marks should stand without adjustment. On occasions, some discussion is required and marks should be agreed based on a negotiated outcome. In the rare cases where agreement cannot be reached, the matter should be brought to the attention of the relevant Programme Lead, Higher Education Coordinator, Curriculum Head or exceptionally to the Dean of Higher Education, who may decide on further action such as additional moderation or marking. Where there are discrepancies evident in the case of multiple markers, adjustment to all marks awarded by a marker is permissible.

### **Second marking of dissertations and final year projects**

All final year dissertations and projects will be independently second marked. Marking will normally be unseen (the second marker will have no knowledge of the

first marker's grade). The outcome of this process will be either confirmation of the first marker's judgement without need for a meeting or a discussion between markers to resolve the differences between the two markers.

Where first and second markers cannot agree, a third marker will be assigned. Marking will normally be unseen (the third marker will have no knowledge of the first and second marker's results).

Both markers' feedback should be returned to the students with clarity about what is First and Second marking. A record of who first and second marked students assessments should be shared with the external examiner.

### Releasing Marks

Provisional marks accompanied by feedback should be made available to students within the maximum of a maximum of 20 working days. Work can be released before the 20-working days, particular at the beginning of the academic year when they submit an early assessment and need developmental feedback, and at end of the academic year before award boards.

### External Examiners

Subject External Examiners comment on assessment processes, and on the standard, content and development of the modules within the subject. They are members of the Subject Assessment Panel which confirms or modifies module marks and ensures that the students are being assessed in accordance with the assessment programme and the intended learning outcomes for the subject modules.

The College's [Notes for Guidance for External Examiners](#) provide further details of the role and responsibilities of external examiners. External Examiners do not double mark or moderate **individual students'** work. If a Subject External Examiner believes that standards of marking overall, or within a particular classification, are inappropriate, s/he may propose that all marks in that category be revised following a review of an appropriate sample of students' work.

The Subject External Examiner has the right to see all elements and forms of subject assessment, including examination scripts, coursework, project reports, design work and dissertation in order to fulfil the role. In order to most effectively focus externals' input to the College's quality assurance framework, the normal expectation is that there would be detailed scrutiny of approximately one third of



the modules (across all Levels) to which the external is assigned in each academic year.

Scrutiny will normally include modules which:

- Are running for the first time
- Have been taught and/or assessed by staff new to South Devon College
- Modules which have a pass rate below 90% at level 4 and 95% at level 5.
- Modules identified by the College (e.g. as part of annual review action planning) as requiring specific attention.
- Modules identified by the external examiner
- A selection of undergraduate final year dissertations or projects.

Each module must receive detailed scrutiny within the three year cycle.

In the case of modules being taught multiple times during the academic year agreement will be made at the commencement of the academic year as to which cohorts modules will be sampled.

## South Devon College Marking and Moderation Flowchart

