

Marking of Coursework and Dissertations

All coursework is evaluated by three examiners. The First Marker (normally although not exclusively the Module Convener), the Second Marker who checks all marks or Moderator who checks a selection of marks and External Examiner.

The First marker reads all of the papers, and makes commentary and awards a grade to each. That list of comments and grades is then passed to the Second Marker along with the papers. The job of the Second Marker is to read all scripts, with a particular focus on all distinction, fail, and borderline cases. If the papers are passed to a moderator, a selection of the essays will be read including all distinction, fail, and borderline cases. Where the Second Marker/ Moderator disagrees with the first grade, there is discussion. The papers along with the agreed marks are then sent to the External Examiner.

The role of the External Examiner is twofold. Firstly to ensure that the marking is consistent across the modules since they will have oversight of the entire spectrum of work; coursework, exam scripts and Dissertations. The External Examiner also ensures that grades are consistent among British universities. Secondly, to adjudicate disagreements, where these exist, among the Internal Examiners. If ever the Internals cannot agree, they must accept the word of the External Examiner, which is final and cannot be questioned.

The External Examiner will read a sample of all work. Importantly, they will read all Distinctions, all Fails and all Borderline work to ensure that they are fairly warranted. No student is ever awarded a distinction, or failed, without the sanction of the External Examiner. For modules with a small number of students this will mean that they will read all papers, which for the larger ones it will only be a percentage. If the External Examiner has any doubt about the consistency of the marking they will ask that the entire module be re-graded.

Once a student has completed all six taught modules, their results are placed before a Board Examiners which is normally composed of the Director of Graduate Studies, the Chief Examiner, the External Examiner, and to the extent practicable the Module Conveners involved in the Marking. The role of this Board is to review the marking of and confirm the marks to be awarded for all modules, make recommendations for the award of Degrees and make recommendations with regard to progression, referrals and termination of registration. Students will receive a letter stating that their coursework marks have been formally confirmed and that they can now proceed to prepare a Dissertation; this is commonly referred to as Progression. Once the marks for the Dissertation have been completed the students Composite Mark Sheet goes back before the Board of Examiners and the recommendations for the award of a degree are made.