

Subject Moderation

What is moderation?

Moderation is concerned with the consistency, comparability, reliability and fairness or professional judgement about the levels demonstrated by students.

Why is moderation necessary?

Awarding marks entails human judgement so, when two markers mark the same script, it is unlikely that there will be precise agreement. Two people assessing the same piece of work may disagree on whether enough of a skill has been demonstrated or whether an answer is clear. Even one person may mark a piece of work, then re-mark it later and make slightly different judgements without being 'wrong' either time. It is possible to reduce differences with practice, experience and discussion, but they will always exist. A small tolerance is therefore allowed when moderating. If the differences between a moderator's marking and the original marking are within this tolerance, the differences can be taken as a legitimate variation in judgement and the original marks can be accepted. If the differences are outside the tolerance, adjustments may need to be made.

How will moderation work?

The stages below should happen for every exam

Stage 1 – Subject leaders (or appropriate member of staff) to lead pre marking CPD session that covers the following;

- Outlines examination paper and corresponding mark-scheme
- Models answers and facilitates discussion around what will and won't be accepted
- Mechanics of marking process (deadlines, who, what, when)
- Actions taken to ensure reliability is improved (blind marking, one question at a time, mark in small bursts)
- How to physically mark papers and record marks (pen colour, annotations, number of marks)
- Establish accepted tolerance level

Pre-marking CPD session should be conducted on the day of the exam to ensure exam security is maintained and before any scripts are marked. These sessions should be recorded or minutes taken.

Stage 2 – Identify the papers to be moderated

- 10% of scripts should be second marked (a minimum of 10 scripts for smaller subject cohorts)
- Papers moderated should be selected at random
- All moderation should be 'blind'
- 10% of low, middle and high marked scripts should be moderated
- 10% of all markers scripts should be moderated

Good practice is to mark a small number of scripts, moderate to identify any potential issues and then continue to mark the rest

