



Senate

Paper Title	Chair's actions
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to note the detail of Chair's actions taken since the last meeting of Senate, not covered as a separate item on the agenda.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	<p>Academic Regulations 2024-25 At the Senate meeting on 13 June 2024, Senate approved the Academic Regulations for 2024-25. The following small, programme-specific changes were approved by Chair's action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The removal of clause 4.94 relating to third attempts for MBBS students as this was now covered by clauses 2.105 and 2.106 (non-programme specific clauses), • Minor additions to clauses 6.24 and 6.25 to more clearly articulate the rules around the academic level at which students studying the CertHE Applied Finance apprenticeship programme must pass modules to progress. <p>Student Learning Engagement Policy Following discussion at the Senate meeting on 13 June 2024 and an email consultation in July 2024, the revised Student Learning Engagement Policy was approved by Chair's Action.</p> <p>Marking Policy At the Senate meeting on 13 June 2024, it was noted that the Marking Policy would be considered by circulation following additional review by the Education Quality and Standards Board (EQSB), focusing on the question of marking turnaround times. It was agreed that this matter required additional consideration, and that further discussions would take place in the 2024-25 academic year. In order to have approved marking procedures in place for the new year, the pre-existing approved wording from the 2023-24 Assessment Handbook has been restored.</p> <p>The full details of the Chair's action are provided for members' information.</p>
Questions for Senate to consider	n/a
Regulatory/statutory reference points	n/a
Strategy and risk	n/a
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	n/a
Authors	Jane Pallant, Director of Governance and Legal Services
Sponsor	n/a

Senate Chair's action request: Academic Regulations 2024-25

Senate Chair's action is requested to make two small, programme-specific, changes to the Academic Regulations 2024-25 approved by the Senate in June 2024.

1. MBBS regulations on the number of attempts

A third attempt was approved for the MBBS and BDS earlier in the year, and this was codified in the regulations at the June meeting. It was noted in the meeting that discussions with the IHSE remained ongoing on the fine detail of the wording, as the pre-existing regulations included content that overlapped with the new policy (this was not the case for the BDS). Most changes had been made prior to Senate, but the IHSE and DGLS have agreed on the removal of one additional clause, which is now deemed superfluous:

[To be deleted]

4.94. The Subject Examination Board may give further consideration to any student who is to be deregistered, or at risk of deregistration, from the programme, as follows:

- i. where a student, otherwise in good standing, has failed to pass any or all Sections of a Part within the permitted number of attempts and has a well-documented record of severe difficulties during the year, the Board may permit the student to retake the year without penalty with resit provisions operating as if the student is taking the year for the first time. Marks achieved during the resit year will not be capped.*

The other subclauses of 4.94 had already been deleted, meaning that 4.94 would now be deleted in its entirety.

The following, pre-existing, regulations cover the same points without requiring the additional programme-specific regulation:

2.105 A first take may be recommended where extenuating circumstances impacted meaningfully upon a student's attendance and performance for one or more modules and where there is good reason why the student did not interrupt their studies at the proper time.

2.106 A first take replaces the original teaching and does not count as an additional attempt. The results for the first take are not capped, and normal resit provision will apply. A student on the MBBS or BDS programmes will normally need to first take a full year, rather than individual affected modules.

2. CertHE Applied Finance progression and award regulations

The CertHE Applied Finance is an apprenticeship programme in the School of Economics and Finance. It has existing special regulations for progression and award (as it is a non-standard programme). The programme team asks to make small amendments to include additional requirements on the academic level at which students must pass modules for progression (rather than solely on the volume of credit and the average mark, as previously). This is to ensure the closest possible alignment with the apprenticeship standards. This will not materially impact students but provides a clearer articulation of the rules, both for students and for the set-up of the progression and award algorithms. The regulations are unchanged except for the additions, marked in bold:

*6.24 To progress from developmental year one to year two a student must take 105 credits, pass a minimum of 75 credits **at level 4**, and achieve a credit-weighted year average mark of 40.0 or higher.*

6.25 To qualify for the award of CertHE in Applied Finance a student must:

- i. *Take 180 credits, including a minimum 150 at level 4 (or higher) and a maximum 30 at level 3.*
- ii. *Pass a minimum of 150 credits at level 4 (or higher).*
- iii. *Achieve a Classification Mark of 40.0 or higher. The Classification Mark will be calculated using 1:3 weightings for the weighted year average marks of years one:two respectively.*

Approval from the Chair of the Senate

Approved on 26 July 2024.



**Senate Chair's action request
Student Learning Engagement Policy**

Summary

This is a request for the approval of the Student Learning Engagement Policy by Chair's Action.

Background

Following discussion at the June Senate meeting, the Student Learning Engagement Policy was revised and recirculated to members for comment. Six members provided comments and 14 members confirmed that they would be happy to approve the policy. Comments received have been factored into the attached version of the policy. As the number of Senate members approving the policy did not reach the threshold for a quorate decision, we are seeking a Chair's Action to approve the policy.

Appendices:

Revised policy (including cover sheet)

Comments provided by Senate members

Approval from the Chair of the Senate

Approved on 19 August 2024



Senate

Paper Title	Student Learning Engagement Policy
Outcome requested	To approve the Student Learning Engagement Policy
Points for Senate members to note and further information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The policy sets out the options for the monitoring of student learning engagement and supportive interventions for schools and institutes to apply. The procedures and accompanying guidance are designed to be used flexibly to ensure that the most appropriate measures for each discipline are used. 2. It is recognised that the current university Learner Engagement Analytics (LEA) platform (QEngage) will not be fully able to deliver the principles of this policy at this point in time so this version enables Schools and Institutes to utilise whatever data points they can until such time that a single university wide platform is in use. 3. A process is under way to improve or replace that platform by September 2025. This policy coming into force from September 2024 is an important part of that process as it establishes the principles and processes that any platform should be based upon. Schools and Institutes will be supported to implement this policy as fully as possible but it is recognised that in some cases this will be limited in the first year. 4. Detailed Guidance for Schools and Institutes to use to support implementation has been produced and is available as a separate document. Procedures related to the university's obligations for monitoring students on a Student visa are also available, but all our students are subject to the same policy. 5. A Learner Engagement Project Board has been established to oversee implementation of this policy and the process of identifying the future platform. This will include Faculty and School/Institute representation. This Board will also review the data and outcomes of the first year of implementation and make recommendations for amendments to the policy and process if necessary. 6. The policy suggests each School or Institute identify Learner Engagement Leads to support the implementation of the policy. In reality many Schools and Institutes will already have such a lead, likely to be a Senior Tutor or similar, and it is envisaged a professional services role may also be identified to support them. This is not expected to result in significant new workload.

	<p>7. The policy also includes a ‘student facing’ summary to explain the purpose of the policy as simply and clearly as possible to students.</p> <p>8. The process of creating this policy and its related Guidance has been collaborative across all faculties with input invited from all Schools and Institutes throughout, and significant amendments have been made based on that consultation. However further discussion at Heads of School or Faculty Executive meetings can be arranged.</p>
Questions for Senate to consider	Is Senate satisfied with the policy?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	The aim of the Policy is to set out minimum requirements, expectations, and clear standards to ensure consistent support for student engagement, aligned with the OfS Conditions of Registration.
Strategy and risk	Ensuring the monitoring of student engagement will make it possible to identify students who could be at risk of not progressing and provide interventions and support to ensure academic success. This should result in an improvement in Not Eligible to Progress (NEtP) scores across the university.
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	Senate to approve
Authors	Chris Shelley, Director of Student Experience
Sponsor	Professor Stephanie Marshall, Vice-Principal (Education)

Student Learning Engagement Policy

Introduction

1. Improving students' engagement with their learning is one of the four pillars of Queen Mary's Education Strategy and a key enabler to open the doors of opportunities and be the most inclusive university of its kind. To achieve this, we have formulated this policy to improve the educational experience for our learners, and by using Learner Engagement Analytics (LEA) to measure and analyse learner engagement data.
2. Learner engagement is a multi-dimensional concept strongly associated with learning, retention, attainment, and success. Measuring it can provide insights into the learner's experience on a module or programme.

Purpose

3. This policy requires schools and institutes to monitor student engagement, which will make it possible to identify students who could be at risk of not progressing and provide interventions and support to ensure academic success and a positive student experience.
4. This policy sets out the options for the monitoring of student learning engagement for schools and institutes to apply to their modules. The procedures will be used flexibly in order to ensure that the most appropriate measures for each discipline are used.
5. The policy aims to empower students to understand how their data is used in relation to their engagement and be partners in their learning process.

Scope

6. This policy applies to all students, other than postgraduate research students, unless the specific regulations of the programme dictate otherwise. All schools and institutes should follow this policy. Our requirement to effectively monitor the engagement of those students who are sponsored on a Student visa (previously known as a Tier 4 student visa) are outlined in separate guidance.

Key Principles

7. This policy is governed by a [Statement of Principles](#) developed in consultation with staff and learners:
 - We will use LEA to help all learners reach their full academic potential.
 - We will be transparent about data collection, sharing, consent and responsibilities including to learners
 - We will abide by ethical principles and align with our university strategy, policies and values.
 - LEA will be supported by focused staff and learner development activities.
 - LEA will not be used to inform significant action at an individual level without human intervention.
 - We will actively work to recognise and address any potential negative impacts of LEA.

Procedures

8. Engagement metrics may vary based on several factors, and since each module is different, each school and institute will utilise a range of engagement markers to gauge learner engagement accurately.

9. Schools will closely monitor learners' engagement and active participation in various activities that are pertinent to their programme. These activities could include (but are not limited to):
 - Attendance at selected timetabled teaching events such as large or small group sessions, labs and/or relevant teaching placements
 - Assignment submissions (formative and summative)
 - Use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) (i.e. QMplus) and engaging with the resources on the platform
 - Meetings with staff members such as academic advisors, supervisors and the student support team.
 - Evidence of other engagement with learning e.g. lecture capture recordings
 - Recorded engagement in co-curricular activities or development sessions e.g. Academic Skills
10. This monitoring *may* only apply to certain aspects of the relevant programme as deemed most appropriate by the school or institute, for example core modules, as long as a cross section is included sufficient to give an accurate presentation of engagement.
11. Insights from the engagement data will be used by schools and institutes in various ways to provide support to learners, which will enable them to prosper in their studies, for example through setting up meetings with Advisors, directing students to access specific learning resources or agreeing a referral to support services.
12. Learner engagement is measured primarily through the University's analytics platform. However various measures may be used if they are confirmed to provide accurate data. The measures used will be agreed by each School or Institute.
13. Where the data implies students are disengaging, interventions will be dealt with by the appropriate staff member in the school based on their agreed process, and this process will be communicated clearly to students. When an issue is highlighted in which intervention might be appropriate, there will first be discussion with colleagues about the nature and appropriateness of any intervention.
14. Interventions will be supportive and constructive to identify the support the student needs, confirm the reasons for the disengagement and the options for the student to re-engage.
15. If the data evidences that students are disengaging based on the measures outlined above then every effort will be made to contact them to clarify the facts, understand the cause of the disengagement and identify any support required. Every attempt will be made to establish contact and to re-engage them - including by university email, personal email, phone call, checking all digital data e.g. log ins, swipe access to buildings etc.
16. Students should respond to attempts to reach them as soon as possible to discuss their circumstances. If the student does not actively engage with any of these attempts and there is no evidence of any engagement for a sustained period of time then the School or Institute will invoke the [Enhancing Support for Students' Fitness to Study Policy](#).

Making supportive interventions

17. The University recognises that analytics can never give a complete picture of an individual's learning and may not take into account personal circumstances. It also recognises the importance of individual conversations alongside data analysis to obtain a more complete view of a situation. Steps will be taken to ensure that trends, norms, categorisation or any labelling of students do not bias staff, student or institutional perceptions and behaviours towards them, introduce discriminatory attitudes or increase power differentials.
18. Learning analytics systems and interventions will be carefully designed and regularly reviewed to ensure that:

- Students maintain appropriate levels of ownership and autonomy in decision making relating to their learning, using learning analytics where appropriate to help inform their decisions;
- Opportunities for "gaming the system" or any benefit to the student from doing so are minimised through use of large data sets, and monitoring of trends and patterns;
- Knowledge that their activity is being monitored does not lead to non-participation by students or other negative impacts on their academic progress or wellbeing;
- Adverse impacts as a result of giving students and staff information about the students' performance or likelihood of success are minimised;
- Staff will have an opportunity to engage in the understanding of legal, ethical and unethical practice.

Roles and Responsibilities

19. Each School or Institute will identify at least one learner engagement lead to monitor delivery within the school or institute who will be provided with appropriate training and guidance.
20. It is the responsibility of each school and institute to ensure the Student Learning Engagement Policy is implemented effectively across programmes. Faculties will monitor this implementation via learner engagement leads.
21. It is recognised that implementation will include differentiation across programmes and modules and that appropriate levels of engagement and intervention will be agreed at School/Institute level and applied by relevant leads.
22. Schools will be responsible for communicating to their learners in multiple ways – e.g. Student Handbooks, Module Tutor briefings, QMplus, slides in classes, emails to module groups - what the minimum expected levels of engagement are with the chosen metrics, and what the interventions will look like, including who will make them.
23. Students will have access to their data and it is their responsibility to access it if they wish to. They will be given support and guidance on how to do this.
24. For students studying on joint and interdisciplinary programmes it is the 'Home School' who has the responsibility to address engagement concerns and be responsible for communicating with the 'Contributing School(s)' wherever necessary. The 'Contributing School(s)' should still monitor the academic engagement for the modules and if these students are not engaging with their studies should alert the 'Home School'. The 'Home School' should then reach out in a pastoral capacity to help the student to re-engage.

Support requirements and signposting services

25. Student Support operates within the framework of the university's core function as an educational institution. Our aim is to facilitate and empower students to actively participate in all aspects of their student lives, eliminating obstacles as needed. This is to ensure they can reach their maximum potential and thrive in both their academic pursuits and life beyond Queen Mary University of London.
26. Our primary student support contacts, usually known as 'Student Support Officers', or sometimes 'Student Support Managers', are based in our schools and institutes. Among their functions is to monitor student engagement and, where appropriate, signpost students to the range of specialist support services which are based in central Professional Services directorates such as Student Experience (<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/student-experience/>).

Complaints

27. If a learner would like to complain about the way their engagement is monitored or the interventions proposed have been handled then they may complain through the [Student](#)

[Complaints Procedure](#), although informal resolution via the school or institute is always preferred

Use of Data

28. All personal data will be treated strictly in accordance with our [Data Protection Policy](#) and data protection legislation.

Comments received by Senate members on the Student Learning Engagement Policy

Introduction

A consultation on the Student Learning Engagement Policy ran between Tuesday 16th July until Tuesday 23rd August (a one-week period). The comments received are included below.

In addition to the comments received, 14 further members confirmed that they would be happy to approve the policy.

Comments received

I would have liked a line that defines what 'engagement' means in this regard.

Para 25 it should read Queen Mary University of London, not Queen Mary, University of London

What is the outcome of continued non-engagement by a student?

Check enhancing fitness to study link – currently seems to link to SharePoint. May be best to link to Policy Zone version so colleagues have access (<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/governance-and-legal-services/media/arcs/policyzone/Enhancing-Support-for-Students%C3%A2%C2%80%C2%99-Fitness-to-Study.pdf>)

I have a slight concern about the wording of number 9, which contains a list of activities.

The wording here is 'These activities include' which suggests that every single activity listed here needs to be monitored. From my experience, our current infrastructure does not allow us to do monitor all the listed items. If the policy is to be aspirational, this is fine. If not, I suggest replacing 'include' by 'normally include'.

The coversheet says that "this is not expected to result in significant workload" – in my experience the only way that the policy can be implemented such that it doesn't create significant workload is to monitor very few data sets, each at selected time point(s), for each cohort. This will identify the students with (almost) no engagement but will be insufficient to identify those whose attendance is dropping off. We must be conscious that limited investment means limited implementation and limited gain.

In the policy itself, paragraph 19 outlines one lead per school / institute. Our schools and institutes are not all the same size and profile; some schools may require more people to have oversight of student engagement and all of these people will need to receive the “appropriate training and guidance”.

I didn't see any provision in the policy for data collection and subsequent review in spring 2025 to monitor the impact of the policy, both in terms of the costs of implementation and the impact it may have had on student engagement and retention. A review in spring 2025 would allow for amendments to be made and approved ahead of the new academic year.

It might be good to indicate the full name for LEA and NEtP.



Senate Chair's action request Marking Policy

Summary

This is a request for the approval of the Marking Policy by Chair's Action. The approval is time sensitive to ensure we have the policy in place for the start of the academic year.

Background

At the June 2024 meeting of the Senate it was noted that the Marking Policy (which will form part of the Assessment Handbook) would be considered by circulation following additional review by the Education Quality and Standards Board (EQSB). That review has now taken place, focusing on the question of marking turnaround times. It was agreed that this matter required additional consideration, and that further discussions would take place in the 2024-25 academic year. In order to have approved marking procedures in place for the new year, the pre-existing approved wording from the 2023-24 Assessment Handbook has been restored. This reads as follows:

"Assessments will normally be marked within 15 working days of the assessment taking place (or of the official submission deadline), with provisional marks returned to students. If this is not possible, students should be informed of the reason for the delay and the expected return date. For certain assessments where provisional marks are not given longer turnaround times may apply."

As noted above, discussions on this topic will continue in 2024-25. Other parts of the Policy (notably the section on scaling) will also be under review, as planned. Attached to this email are a Senate cover sheet, a summary of changes between the Assessment Handbook chapter 'Marks and Marking' and the new Marking Policy, and the Marking Policy itself.

Senate members were given two weeks to provide their comments on the revised policy. Comments received are included as an appendix and, where relevant, will be factored into the in-year review for the 2025-26 policy.

Approval from the Chair of the Senate

Approved on 19 August 2024.

Senate

Paper title	Marking Policy
Outcome requested	Approval.
Points to note and further information	<p>The Marking Policy is a new document but draws heavily from the ‘Marks and Marking’ chapter of the Assessment Handbook, which it will replace. It includes additional sections, particularly on the appointment of markers, the responsibilities of the various parties involved, marking schemes, and contingency arrangements. Little has been removed, but there are some sections on mark processing and results release that no longer sit well in this section and will be moved elsewhere in the Handbook.</p> <p>A short document summarising the changes is appended to this cover sheet.</p> <p>The Policy will be subject to further revisions over time as other parts of the Assessment Handbook are reviewed. In addition to the revision of the scaling policy this is likely to include an expanded section on the role of external examiners in marking (which is currently addressed in a separate chapter of the Handbook dealing specifically with the role of externals), and additional consideration of marking and feedback turnaround procedures and timelines.</p>
Questions to consider	<p>a. Does the Policy cover all required areas, and does it cover them in an appropriate level of detail? Are the sections ordered logically?</p> <p>b. The attached summary document highlights the main changes introduced in this Policy. Members are asked to use that document as a basis for discussions. Some of the more significant points include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Temporary restoration of the 2023-24 policy on marking turnaround times, while discussions on the format of a future policy continue. (§9). ii. The new section on the appointment of markers, and the criteria that markers must meet to be appointed (§16-20). iii. The requirement to consider technical proficiency in the English language, as set out by the Office for Students (§24). iv. The removal of the E grade from undergraduate marking schemes (in favour of an enlarged D grade zone) (§27-29)). v. A prohibition on direct summative peer assessment (§32). vi. New arrangements for moderation samples (§43). vii. A clarification that the full provisions of the late submission policy do not apply to examinations (§68). viii. Provisions for contingency arrangements (§73).
Regulatory/statutory reference points	<p>The Office for Students’ Conditions of Registration, especially:</p> <p>B4: The provider must ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. students are assessed effectively; b. each assessment is valid and reliable; c. academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible; d. subject to paragraph B4.3, in respect of each higher education course, academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of

	<p>technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable higher education course; and</p> <p>e. relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously.</p> <p>B5: The provider must ensure that, in respect of any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course provided by, or on behalf of, the provider (whether or not the provider is the awarding body):</p> <p>a. any standards set appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards; and</p> <p>b. awards are only granted to students whose knowledge and skills appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards.</p>
<p>Strategy and risk</p>	<p>Aligns with the Education and Student Experience Strategy and the Assessment Strategy, and to risks associated with those Strategies.</p>
<p>Reporting/ consideration route for the paper</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The EQSB Assessment Sub-Board was commissioned to review several issues related to assessment, including marking. The Sub-Board established a dedicated stream for marking, with specific objectives for review. The Sub-Board included representatives from each Faculty, from QMSU, and from relevant Professional Services directorates. 2. The Sub-Board considered a first draft of the Policy in February 2024. 3. The Sub-Board considered a second draft of the Policy in April 2024, drawing on feedback from the previous meeting. 4. The Education Quality and Standards Board considered a third draft in May 2024, drawing on feedback from the April Sub-Board meeting. Faculty and other representatives were invited to share the paper with key stakeholders and feed back their comments to their EQSB. 5. Following considerations made in advance of the June Senate meeting, the Policy was referred to the EQSB in July 2024for additional consideration. 6. The Policy has now been circulated to Senate members.

Summary of meaningful changes in the new Marking Policy

The Policy is a new document but draws upon the pre-existing 'Marks and Marking' chapter of the Assessment Handbook (which it will replace). Much of the original content has been retained - sometimes in a new format - but there are also wholly new sections and some existing sections have been amended. Notable changes are outlined below.

1. A new section on the responsibilities of the various parties involved has been added (§8-15).
2. The section on marking turnaround time remains under review, and discussions will continue on the future shape of this clause. The 2023-24 wording (the pre-existing approved policy has been restored while those discussions continue:

“Assessments will normally be marked within 15 working days of the assessment taking place (or of the official submission deadline), with provisional marks returned to students. If this is not possible, students should be informed of the reason for the delay and the expected return date. For certain assessments where provisional marks are not given longer turnaround times may apply.”

3. A previous requirement for all examinations (assessments coded EXM or EXN in SITS) to be subject to one of the five quality assurance methods, irrespective of their weightings within a module, has been removed. In practice, nearly all examinations count for $\geq 50\%$ of a module mark and will therefore be subject to those processes in any case, but the Sub-Board and the EQSB agreed that the provision – which originally dates from a time when most modules included examinations counting for $\geq 70\%$ of a module mark – had become less relevant as assessments had diversified and that examinations no longer had any inherent special status over other assessment types.
4. A new section on the appointment of markers has been added, including a formal requirement for markers to have appropriate knowledge and experience as judged by the Subject Examination Board (§16-20).
5. The section on criterion-referenced marking and marking schemes has been expanded, and formally establishes generic Queen Mary marking schemes with which school/institute-level schemes must align (these match the existing grade boundaries) (§21-30).
 - a. It is proposed that the E grade in the undergraduate scheme (40.0 – 44.9) be removed with effect from 2024-25 in favour of an expanded D grade (changing from 45.0 – 49.9 to 40.0 – 49.9) to align with the classification scales. The E grade is a historical remnant from a time when it aligned with a now obsolete degree classification of 'Pass', and when the Third Class range ran from 45.0 – 49.9. The Policy includes explanatory notes on how this would be applied.
 - b. A new clause has been added that relates to use of the English language in assessment. This is a non-negotiable requirement of the Office for Students, relating to Condition of Registration B4. The new text reads “Marking schemes must ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner that appropriately reflects the level and content of the module.”

6. The EQSB and its Sub-Board considered the place of peer assessment and concluded that this had a valuable role but that direct peer assessment under which students directly awarded final summative marks to each other would not be permitted. Benchmarking showed that this position was in line with common sector practices. The following text is proposed: “Peer assessment provides valuable experience in assessment literacy and may be used either as formative assessment or as evidence to inform a summative mark awarded by a Queen Mary marker. Clear marking criteria and expectations for feedback must be made known to students. Direct peer assessment under which students directly award final summative marks to each other is not permitted.” (§32).
7. Two changes have been proposed to the operation of moderation.
 - a. One of the previous moderation outcomes was a rejection of the original marking and a requirement that all assessments be second marked. This has been clarified to state that the assessments must be re-marked rather than second marked, as if the original marking was unsound, second marking would not necessarily rectify the issue. Following the re-mark the assessments (and the new marking) would then be quality assured again through moderation or another approved means (§40.c).
 - b. The requirements for the moderation sample have been amended, and simplified. Previously, the minimum sample size was 25% for long-answer assessments and 10% for short-answer assessments (with a minimum sample size of ten in both cases). Benchmarking and internal feedback indicated that the 25% was high; this has been amended to 10% for all assessment types (where moderation is permitted), retaining the minimum sample size of ten but adding additional requirements to ensure that where an assessment has multiple markers there are provisions in place to ensure that every marker is marking consistently with the others as well as with the marking scheme (§43, 45). As was previously the case, the moderator should have also access to data on the distribution of the full set of marks (available in PowerBI).
 - c. Additionally, a change has been made from earlier drafts of the Marking Policy. Previously this stated that in a moderating pair, the more experienced of the two markers should act as the moderator. This has been removed in favour of a statement that all moderators must be properly trained and inducted in moderation. SEBs will use their judgement in assigning trained markers to particular roles.
8. The section dealing with requirements for marking trails has been expanded to make explicit reference to the Office for Students’ requirement to retain assessment (including marking records) for a period extending to five years after the point at which a student completes their programme of study (§46-50).
9. The language in the section on standard-setting and scaling has been updated without making substantive changes at this stage. The Assessment Sub-Board has an open action to develop a common scaling policy for the whole of Queen Mary. This will be part of the next round of developments, in 2024-25, and the Marking Policy will be amended for 2025-26 to include the outputs of that review (§52-61).
10. The policy on late submission of assessment has been updated. The vast majority of changes are not substantive and are intended only to clarify the language and meaning. However, the policy has been amended to explicitly state that it does not apply in full to examinations, and

that failure to submit an examination by the deadline will result in an immediate mark of zero rather than a graduated deduction of marks over several days (the existing provisions around extenuating circumstances still apply). The previous wording referred to 'coursework and other in-course assessment' – it did not state that the policy applied to examinations, and that was not its intention (§68).

11. The provisions for the marking of illegible assessments have been included in the Policy for the first time. These were previously published in the Academic Regulations (and remain there) but have been included in the Marking Policy for completeness. The current provisions have not been changed (§69).
12. A new section on contingency arrangements has been added, to provide an institutional framework through which to deal with situations that mean it is not possible to deliver the standard marking procedures: "Circumstances may occasionally arise that mean, for operational reasons, it is not possible or appropriate to deliver all aspects of the Marking Policy in the manner set out in this document. In such cases Queen Mary will, through an appropriately constituted institutional group, develop, communicate and implement alternative contingency marking arrangements that pay due regard to internal and external expectations and obligations." (§73).

Marking Policy

Scope

1. Marking is the process by which numerical marks and/or letter grades are assigned to a student's assessment to recognise the level of achievement. It is a key quality assurance mechanism that ensures assessment outcomes are fair, valid, and reliable and in turn ensures that classification and award outcomes achieve those same qualities.
2. This Marking Policy applies to the marking of assessments for all taught modules delivered by Queen Mary University of London. This includes the assessment of taught modules (though not to other assessments) delivered as part of postgraduate research programmes.

Definitions

3. The following terms are relevant to this Policy:

Confirmed marks: marks which have been approved by a Subject Examination Board (SEB) and are considered final.

Degree Examination Board (DEB): a Faculty- and University-level assessment committee.

Double marking: marking of the same assessment twice, by different markers.

External examiner: an educationalist and/or subject expert external to Queen Mary who completes a series of defined tasks to assure the quality of marking, assessment, and some related processes. An external examiner does not generally act directly as a marker.

Formative assessment: an assessment for which the mark does not count towards the module mark.

Internal examiner: a person who conducts marking, double-marking, or moderation. An internal examiner is not necessarily a Queen Mary employee; their 'internal' status is defined in opposition to the separate role of 'external examiner'.

Moderation: review of a defined sample of marked work to confirm the quality of marking, which may result in mark adjustments if an issue is identified.

Peer assessment: assessment of students by other students in their cohort.

Provisional marks: marks that have not yet been considered by a SEB and therefore are potentially subject to change.

Scaling: adjustment of marks where there was an issue with the assessment design.

Standard-setting: Calibration of the difficulty level of an assessment, in line with expectations for the discipline and the academic level of the module.

Subject Examination Board (SEB): a school/institute-level assessment committee.

Summative assessment: an assessment for which the mark counts towards the module mark.

Stages of marking

4. All assessments must be first marked by an [appropriate marker](#) in line with the [appropriate marking criteria](#).
5. To assure standards in marking, a minimum 50 percent of the assessment for each module must undergo one of [five approved quality assurance mechanisms](#). This comprises 50 percent of the elements of assessment by weighting, not 50 percent of the students or 50 percent of the submissions for each element. For example, where a module's assessment comprised 'Essay 1' (40%) and 'Essay 2' (60%), the marking of 'Essay 2' would have to be quality assured. The SEB would also have the option of applying the quality assurance mechanism to 'Essay 1'. Where two (or more) elements of assessment from the same module will be subject to the process, the SEB does not need to use the same mechanism for both elements.
6. Once this quality assurance is complete the Subject Examination Board (SEB) should send samples of marked work, assessment briefs, and marking criteria to a formally appointed external examiner for review. The external examiner will conduct an objective review and either endorse the marking or raise queries or concerns with the SEB. External examiners cannot change individual marks. Additional details on the role of external examiners in marking is given in Section 8 of the [Assessment Handbook](#).
7. The SEB will consider the quality assured marks and, if it is fully satisfied, will approve the marks for the assessments.

Responsibilities

Markers

8. Markers are responsible for assigning marks and grades to students' assessments in accordance with the published marking criteria, and for providing feedback on students' work.
9. Assessments will normally be marked within 15 working days of the assessment taking place (or of the official submission deadline), with provisional marks returned to students. If this is not possible, students should be informed of the reason for the delay and the expected return date. For certain assessments where provisional marks are not given longer turnaround times may apply.
10. A marker who has good reason to believe that academic misconduct is likely to have occurred will immediately report the case to the Academic Misconduct Officer in line with the [Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy](#).

Subject Examination Boards (SEBs)

11. The SEB is responsible for ensuring that marking is completed in accordance with this Policy. The SEB Chair – acting on the authority of the Head of School/Institute Director and with the delegated authority of the Senate – oversees this work and must satisfy the SEB and the Degree Examination Board (DEB) that all specified requirements are met. The Chair works with other SEB members and academic and professional services staff to achieve this aim.

12. The SEB, led by its Chair, must ensure that:

- a. Marking criteria are in place for each assessment.
- b. First markers and (where appropriate) second markers or moderators are assigned to each assessment.
- c. Assessment submission/completion dates are set for students.
- d. Deadlines for the completion of marking and the return of marks are set for markers, based on those assessment dates.
- e. Marking is completed to at least the minimum standards set out in this Policy.
- f. Mark distributions are reviewed at assessment and at module level to ensure that they are appropriate.
- g. Action is taken to address any anomalies in the results where appropriate to do so.
- h. Satisfactory assurance is provided to the DEB that marking has been conducted in accordance with this Policy.

Heads of Schools/Institute Directors

13. The Head of School/Institute Director appoints the SEB Chair, through the delegated authority of the Senate, and is ultimately responsible for the actions of the Chair and the Board.
14. The SEB Chair will not generally have management responsibility for staff and will refer any management matters to the Head of School/Institute Director, or their nominee, for action.

Degree Examination Boards (DEBs)

15. A DEB has oversight of all SEBs under its authority and considers the assurances on marking presented by the SEBs. Should a DEB have any concern it may require that actions be taken to remedy that concern and, where the DEB deems it appropriate, make the concern known to appropriate University authorities.

Appointing markers

16. Markers are assigned to assessments and modules by the relevant SEB.
17. A marker must have an appropriate level of relevant subject knowledge for the assessment in question. The SEB and its Chair determine the appropriate level of knowledge and whether potential markers meet that threshold.
18. All markers must complete training in marking at Queen Mary or be deemed as having knowledge and experience equivalent to that delivered through the training. The Queen Mary Academy offers [online training in marking](#). Markers must also be inducted into local marking procedures for the discipline including understanding normal grade distributions. Markers acting as moderators must be specifically trained by the school/institute and inducted into its moderation procedures and norms. The SEB and its Chair determine – based on Queen Mary and school/institute requirements – the appropriate level of training and whether potential markers meet that threshold.
19. Teaching assistants (including postgraduate research students), staff on honorary contracts, and externally appointed staff may act as markers where they have appropriate knowledge, training, and experience as determined by the SEB and its Chair.

Marking schemes and assignment of marks

20. Marking must be criterion-referenced (rather than norm-referenced), and each mark awarded must be an accurate representation of the student's attainment as demonstrated in the assessment under consideration. Marking must never seek to represent a student's potential.
21. Criterion-referenced marking schemes must be developed with reference to the module- and programme-level learning outcomes that the assessment is designed to test. Markers use academic judgement in interpreting those schemes to assign marks to assessments.
22. Schools and institutes apply marking criteria with reference to their academic discipline, and generally have detailed criteria designed for their local context. These pay due regard to the academic level of the module, the nature of the assessment, and the subject area. In the absence of a specific marking scheme, default to the relevant [generic Queen Mary scheme](#) occurs.
23. Discipline- and assessment-specific marking schemes must align with Queen Mary's [generic schemes](#). Certain programmes or modules may diverge from the normal assessment criteria; where this is the case this must be explicitly brought to students' attention; this is particularly common for collaborative programmes involving Queen Mary and another institution.
24. Marking schemes must ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner that appropriately reflects the level and content of the module.
25. The marking scheme must be communicated to students clearly and in advance of the assessment to make clear what is being assessed and what is expected.
26. Undergraduate generic marking scheme:

Grade	Mark range	Descriptor	Corresponding award classification
A	70.0 – 100.0	Excellent	First Class
B	60.0 – 69.9	Good	Second Class (Upper Division)
C	50.0 – 59.9	Satisfactory	Second Class (Lower Division)
D	40.0 – 49.9	Adequate	Third Class
F	0.0 – 39.9	Fail	Fail

27. The standard pass mark for assessments on certain undergraduate programmes is 50.0; these include the MBBS, the BDS, the BSc Oral Health and the FdCert Clinical Foundation Studies. Additionally, all undergraduate modules at academic level seven have a pass mark of 50.0. In both cases there is no D grade, and the F grade extends from 0.0-49.9.
28. Prior to 2024-25 the undergraduate scheme included an E grade (40.0-44.9) alongside a smaller D grade banding (45.0-49.9). Results for modules on which students were first registered prior to 2024-25 will reflect that previous scheme.
29. Postgraduate taught generic marking scheme:

Grade	Mark range	Descriptor	Corresponding award classification
D	70.0 – 100.0	Excellent	Distinction
M	60.0 – 69.9	Good	Merit
P	50.0 – 59.9	Satisfactory	Pass
F	0.0 – 49.9	Fail	Fail

Rounding of marks

30. Minimising rounding ensures that marks are accurate reflections of student achievement, and only of achievement. Assessments should be marked to integers; if the overall mark for a single assessment is generated from multiple component marks (for example multiple questions on an exam paper) then the overall assessment mark should be rounded up (from ≥ 50) or down (from < 50) to the nearest integer). Module marks and the Classification Mark are held to one decimal point and are generated automatically based on the assessment marks.

Peer assessment

31. Peer assessment provides valuable experience in assessment literacy and may be used either as formative assessment or as evidence to inform a summative mark awarded by a Queen Mary marker. Clear marking criteria and expectations for feedback must be made known to students. Direct peer assessment under which students directly award final summative marks to each other is not permitted.

Quality assurance mechanisms

32. [Having established which elements of assessment will be reviewed](#), the SEB selects and applies one of five approved quality assurance mechanisms: blind double marking, open double marking, mark checking, electronic marking, or moderation.
33. More than one of the five methods may be applied within a single assessment provided they are applied consistently across the cohort. For example, an examination paper might employ double marking for long-form prose questions and mark checking for short-answer questions.
- Dissertations and project reports must be double marked (through blind or open double marking). Mark checking, moderation, and electronic marking are not available. This is due to the differences between individual students' dissertations and projects; they can cover wide-ranging topics, and typically employ larger pools of markers than other modules. Therefore, moderating a sample would not guarantee a consistent level of scrutiny across the module as it would for other assessments.
 - Where 'live' assessments such as presentations are selected for quality assurance the SEB should apply double marking (conducted live) unless there is a recording or other material artefact of the assessment. Where there is such an artefact any of the five methods may be used as appropriate to the assessment.

Blind double marking

34. Blind double marking is the independent assessment of the work by two markers, where neither sees the comments or marks of the other until the whole procedure has been completed.

Open double marking

35. Open double marking is the assessment of the work by two markers, where the second marker can see the comments and marks of the first marker.

Mark checking

36. Mark checking is available only for assessments with very detailed marking schemes that allow little or no discretion to the marker (for example, assessments with right and wrong answers). The checker reviews the first marker's work to ensure that all questions have been marked, that they have been marked correctly, and that the marks have been correctly totalled.

Electronic marking

37. Electronic marking refers to cases where marking is completed automatically, generally by a computer. The results of electronically marked assessments should be checked by the SEB for item difficulty and discrimination. Missing data points shall be checked against the original forms. Any items that do not perform correctly should be reviewed, with the possibility of scaling or exclusion of the question.

Moderation

38. Where moderation is employed, a sample of student submissions for the assessment is reviewed by a second individual, the moderator.
39. The moderator does not have the power to change individual marks as this would be unfair to the students not included in the sample. Instead, the moderator may:
 - a. approve the marking for the assessment, for all students;
 - b. approve the quality of the marking, but deem it either too lenient or too stringent across the cohort in the marks awarded, recommending that marks for the entire cohort be either raised or lowered by an appropriate amount;
 - c. approve the quality of the marking for part of the cohort, but deem that the full range of marks has not been used effectively, recommending that marks falling within certain affected range(s) be either raised or lowered by an appropriate amount;
 - d. reject the marking as unsound, requiring re-marking and quality assurance of the full set of assessments.
40. Where moderation results in recommendations to adjust the marks, this may be either by a percentage or by a set number of marks, depending on the case under consideration. The adjusted marks will be presented to the external examiner and to the SEB, together with an explanation of the need for and the nature of the adjustments.
41. Moderation adjustments may be applied by question or by paper as appropriate. Where different questions in a paper are marked by different individuals, it may be that only one question requires scaling or re-marking. In that situation, all answers to the affected question shall be considered for adjustment or re-marking. Where an entire paper is marked by a single marker the total mark for the paper will normally be considered for scaling/re-marking, unless there is a clear justification for targeting specific questions.
42. The minimum moderation sample size is 10% of the submitted assessments, with a minimum ten assessments. Where there are ten or fewer submissions in total the SEB should not use moderation and should use another of the [quality assurance methods](#).

- a. SEBs should apply judgement to determine an appropriate sample size, beyond the minimum 10%. The nature of an assessment and the number and experience of first markers may warrant larger sample sizes.
 - b. Samples should include assessments from across the range of performance from each first marker, including failed work and work from each grade band.
 - c. The moderator should have access to all assessments, including those that do not form part of the sample, and to the full spread of marks. Detailed analysis of module marks and outcomes is available in the Module Results Analysis app in [PowerBI](#).
43. Moderators may complete additional tasks such as (for example) reviewing all borderline marks (this cannot be limited to those in the sample), where specifically agreed by a SEB and where clear criteria are approved for the purpose.

Multiple markers or marking pairs

44. Where, for one assessment, multiple markers are used, the SEB must ensure that appropriate measures are undertaken to ensure consistency of approach between markers. Examples of appropriate measures include:
- a. Where moderation is employed, representative samples from each marker should be included in the marking sample. If the moderator discovers an issue with the marking then they may isolate any adjustments to assessments marked by a particular first marker.
 - b. Where double marking is employed and there are multiple pairs of double markers the SEB should ensure that each pair is marking to the criteria consistently with other pairs. This may be achieved through a form of moderation, either actively sampling the work of each pair or by reviewing the overall marking distributions of each pair to identify outliers.

Marking trails

45. SEBs must ensure that there is a clear marking trail of comments and notes that can be used by a reviewer to understand and justify how marks were assigned. This is particularly important for external examiners, as evidence in the consideration of appeals that may challenge the marking procedure, and in ensuring compliance with the Office for Students' regulatory obligation to retain appropriate records of students' assessed work for a period of five years after the end date of a programme.
46. The marking trail is not intended as a student feedback mechanism but may serve a supporting role in providing feedback.
47. The marking trails of the first marker and the second marker or moderator must be clearly distinguishable, to allow a reviewer to understand who made which comments and notes.
48. Where moderation is used the SEB must agree and implement a means to ensure that there is clear written evidence of the moderation process. In most cases this will exist separately to the student assessments, as not all submissions will have been part of the moderation sample.
49. As part of the marking trail, markers must record the total mark for the assessment and the breakdown of marks by individual question or section.

Disagreements between markers

50. Where double marking is used the first and second marker may disagree on the marks for individual students' submissions. Where this is the case they should attempt to agree upon a mark. Where they cannot agree upon a mark:
 - a. the first and second markers may agree to split the difference, rounding to the nearest whole number, if the difference is of 10% of the total marks available or fewer.
 - b. if the difference is greater than 10% or if the markers do not agree to split the difference then the assessment will be marked for a third time, and that third mark will stand. The third marker will have access to the marking trails of the first two markers. The third marker should be independent and experienced, with appropriate subject knowledge. They will normally be an internal examiner but may be an external examiner (by specific agreement with the external examiner, as this is not part of their core responsibilities).

Standard-setting and mark scaling

51. Standard-setting is a process used to calibrate the difficulty of assessments in line with expectations for the academic level and the disciplinary area. The SEB is responsible for ensuring that assessments are properly calibrated to the appropriate level.
52. Mark scaling is the adjustment of marks in cases where an issue with the design of the assessment has been identified. It is distinct from the adjustment of marks under [moderation](#); in the case of moderation, any issue is with the quality of the original marking rather than the design of the assessment.
53. If marking identifies an issue with the assessment design, the markers may discuss the possibility of mark scaling with the SEB or its Chair. Scaling seeks to correct the assessment design and may take several forms depending on the specific context. It may, for example, adjust the grade boundaries and marks awarded if the difficulty level was not correctly calibrated despite completion of standard-setting, or it may exclude the results of one or more compromised questions where the assessment is otherwise intact.
54. Scaling cannot be used where there is no clear issue with the design or difficulty of an assessment. Scaling of results solely to meet predefined norms or targets is not acceptable under any circumstances, and scaling is to be reserved as a repair tool to fix problematic assessments rather than to adjust the performance of a cohort. It is recommended that a SEB considering the use of scaling contact the Chair and Secretary of the DEB to discuss the proposal before making any changes.
55. A SEB must have a formal scaling policy in place if it is to use scaling. Scaling and standard setting policies should not normally be devised as reactive measures but developed over a period of time as a standard part of the assessment process. SEB policies require approval by the associated DEB, and should be accessible to staff, external examiners, and students.

56. Scaling and standard setting policies should take account of the varying marking expectations at different academic levels and for different assessment types. The standard marking schemes should also be included for reference. The policy should establish appropriate scaling processes that consider expected mark distributions based on the known abilities of the present cohort, and on the performance of past cohorts on the same assessment. It may be appropriate, following review of marks across assessments and over a period of time, to establish an expected mark range for each marking scheme; where results do not fall within that range, scaling should be considered subject to the provisions of clause 55. For very small cohorts, predetermined ranges and statistical comparisons are likely to have limited value.
57. Scaling will not always be linear, as distortions may only appear at one or two points in the marking range – typically the top and/or the bottom.
58. Should the results of an assessment fail to adequately map onto the approved marking scale, the module organiser and the SEB Chair must review the matter in accordance with the SEB's scaling policy.
59. Scaling can only be applied at the level of an individual element (or sub-element) of assessment and not at the level of the module mark.
60. SEBs must maintain written records of all instances of scaling and include these in the report to the associated DEB.

Anonymity in marking

61. Examinations must be marked anonymously, using the Student Identity Number. The MBBS programme maintains anonymity using separate Candidate Numbers rather than the Student Identity Number for technical reasons associated with mark-reading software.
62. Coursework and other non-examination assessments will be marked anonymously by Student Identity Number where this is practicable. Queen Mary recognises that this is not always possible.

Students who answer too many questions

63. Where a student answers more questions than required by the assessment rubric, only the first x answers will be marked, where x is the number of questions specified in the rubric. Any answers given beyond the first x will not be marked.

Students who exceed or do not meet a specified word count

64. Each school/institute may choose whether or not to apply a penalty where students exceed a specified word count. This may include consideration of the length of a submission as part of the marking criteria rather than a statutory penalty.
65. Where a school/institute applies a penalty for exceeding the maximum specified word count this must be published to students in advance of their submissions.
66. There is no fixed penalty for submissions under the specified word length. Students will either have displayed skill in covering the material concisely or have failed to fully address the material; in either situation the normal marking criteria should take this into account.

Late submission of assessments

67. If an assessment is submitted after the specified deadline it will be recorded as late and a penalty will be applied, unless there are valid extenuating circumstances:
- a. For assessments other than examinations, for every period of 24 hours, or part thereof, that an assessment is late, 5% of the total marks available will be deducted (for example, -5 marks for an assessment marked out of 100). After seven calendar days (168 hours or more late) the mark will be reduced to zero and recorded as 0FL (zero, fail, late).
 - b. For examinations, an immediate mark of 0FL (zero, fail, late) will be applied if a student submits after the end of the examination.
 - c. A student may submit work of passing standard but fail the module because of the late submission penalty. Where the student is eligible for a resit attempt in such a case, the student will not be required to resubmit the assessment; instead, the pre-deduction mark from the first attempt will be entered for the resit. Where a student is not eligible for a resit, this provision does not apply.
 - d. Certain assessments may cease to be valid measures of a module's learning outcomes prior to the seven calendar day cut-off. For example, where feedback has been provided to the class, any submission made after that point would not be an accurate measure of attainment. In such cases, the late submission policy shall apply as normal up to the day on which feedback is given; at that point, a mark of zero (0FL) shall be applied, even if this is within seven calendar days of the deadline. Schools and institutes must make clear to students in advance where this variant policy applies, or else the general policy shall be applied.
 - e. A late work penalty may be removed where a student provides good reason for the late submission under the extenuating circumstances policy. A student must submit a formal claim with supporting evidence for the circumstances to be considered.
 - f. Schools and institutes have discretion to award extensions to submission deadlines where students have valid extenuating circumstances. Where a school/institute does allow extensions, a student must apply before the submission date with an extenuating circumstances claim and supporting evidence. Extensions cannot set a new deadline beyond the next meeting of the relevant Subject Examination Board; if a student requires an extension of that length then the SEB will instead consider the award of a first sit, the result of which will be considered at the subsequent SEB meeting.

Illegible assessments

68. A student must submit legible assessments. Illegible handwriting or assessments will not normally be transcribed, nor will a student be permitted to dictate the contents. Any part of a script deemed illegible by a marker will normally be awarded no marks. Exceptions may apply where a student has a declared specific learning difference (SpLD).

Marking the assessments of students with specific learning differences (SpLDs)

69. The assessments of students with declared specific learning differences (SpLDs) will be marked in precisely the same manner as those of other students, although the markers will be asked to consider the advice on the SpLD Cover Note provided by the Disability and Dyslexia Service. Amongst the advice provided is that marks should not be deducted for poor sentence structure, punctuation, or spelling (unless those are elements being assessed by the assessment).

70. It is the student's responsibility to attach the SpLD Cover Note to all assessments following diagnosis. The Disability and Dyslexia Service will send the relevant School/Institute a document (known as a 'Student Support Summary') which includes details of the provision of the Cover Note only where consent is given by the student, and this does not replace the need for students to use the SpLD Cover note when submitting assessments.

Late diagnosis of SpLDs

71. Where a student is diagnosed with an SpLD after the commencement of their studies, they may request that any work from the present academic year be re-marked with the advice of the SpLD Cover Note in mind. The student should contact their school/institute directly to request this – re-marking will not happen automatically. Results from previous academic years cannot be re-marked or otherwise reconsidered; it is not possible to do so on a basis that is fair and consistent for all students, or in a way that does not base results on potential rather than evidenced attainment. Students and schools are encouraged to engage with the Queen Mary Disability and Dyslexia Service as soon as possible where they feel they have reason to do so (eg, they are concerned they might be dyslexic) to ensure that support is in place as early as possible. Any student who declares a disability – including a SpLD – on application or at enrolment will be proactively contacted by the Disability and Dyslexia Service to arrange support.

Contingency arrangements

72. Circumstances may occasionally arise that mean, for operational reasons, it is not possible or appropriate to deliver all aspects of the Marking Policy in the manner set out in this document. In such cases Queen Mary will, through an appropriately constituted institutional group, develop, communicate and implement alternative contingency marking arrangements that pay due regard to internal and external expectations and obligations.

Version control

73. [to be populated after approval of the final draft]

Comments received by Senate members on the Marking Policy

Introduction

A consultation on the Marking Policy ran between Tuesday 23rd July until Tuesday 6th August (a two-week period). The comments received are included below.

In addition to the comments received, one of which notes support for approval, three further members confirmed that they would be happy to approve the policy.

Comments received

I think that 3 weeks (i.e., 15 working days) is reasonable. There will definitely be times, in my core subject (c. 400 students) where those tutors who have 8 groups (c. 100 students) will not be in a position to return a formative to the students within three weeks, as they will be teaching during that time, and the expectations of feedback on formatives has grown exponentially. They would be in a position where they would have to give the caveat to the students that not all formative assessments will be returned within three weeks. I think that the 3-week timeframe is very doable for optional modules, but not for the big core modules that some Department have to offer for the purposes of qualifying degrees with the regulator. But as I say, those academics affected by large numbers of tutees would have to give the caveat warning. So I think that, as worded, it is workable.

I am sorry to see the abandonment of the D, Third Class (45-49) and E, Pass (40-44), in favour of one classification of D (40-49) (per paras 26-27). In Law, at least, there is a big difference between those, in that E usually signifies that the student probably failed a question along the way in a multi-Q paper, whereas rarely will a D classification have failed any part of the paper, it just wasn't a particularly good paper overall. In any event, you have not asked for feedback on that, so no need to pass on, but I was surprised to see that change.

I am happy for this to be approved. The revisions respond to concerns that have been raised. I hope future versions of the policy address the EDI question of reasonable adjustments for markers (i.e., staff with disabilities such as dyslexia/neurodiversity etc). I would expect the next iteration of this policy to have an impact assessment that confirms markers with disabilities will not be adversely impacted. I know that the relevant teams are considering this.

I'm satisfied that the document appropriately address the "questions to consider" on the coversheet.

However, I have three additional comments:

- Paragraph 8 states that "markers are responsible for ... providing feedback on students' work". Clarity on what constitutes "feedback" would be appropriate here, possibly by linking to and expanding on paragraph 46 ("the marking trail is not intended as a student feedback mechanism") and/or resources on the QMA website on provision of appropriate feedback to students (assuming these exist; if not, they probably should)
 - Paragraph 8 states that "markers are responsible for assigning marks" – what happens to them after that? For example, if I have a pile of physical exam scripts on my desk and I have assigned whole integer marks to them, what happens next? Can I just leave them on my desk? Can I send a spreadsheet to DGLS? Does the SEB chair have to collect the physical scripts from my desk?
 - Paragraphs 45-49 inclusive refer to a marking trail: if this is an OfS regulatory obligation then we should have mechanisms in place for storing that marking trail. At the moment, I keep spreadsheets of who marks which assignment/question, mark awarded, which scripts were moderated/second and final marks awarded – but this is because I'm diligent. It's not shared with anyone and isn't stored anywhere so, if I left QMUL and a case was investigated by the OfS, there would be no institutional record of the marking trail.
-

I was told by our exam board chair that previous feedback had largely been ignored:

The most compelling issue is item 67(a), which seems to cover ANY assessment that is not an examination. We have plenty exam-like timed assessments that are coded as coursework in SIS (e.g. QMplus quizzes to be done in person or online), where such a late submission policy cannot possibly apply. This must be conveyed in a sensible manner, and not in the general terms that 67(a) is stated in.

Similarly, at the opposite end, online final exams (even if sat in invigilated circumstances in an IT lab) have analogous issues:

an exam that is submitted "45 seconds late" for "technical issues" is not really considered by the official policy. Here, a penalty system would perhaps be helpful, but on a much shorter time scale (e.g. 5 marks for every 5 minutes late).

It would be good if Schools had at least an element of discretion in these circumstances.