

Exam and End-of-Module Assessment marking policy

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Alternative format

If you require this policy in an alternative format, please contact the Student Support Team via <http://www.open.ac.uk/contact/> (phone +44 (0)300 303 5303), or your dedicated Student Support Team or Apprenticeship Enrolment and Support Team (AEST) via <https://help.open.ac.uk/contact> if you are a current Open University student.

If you live in Wales you can speak with a student support adviser in Welsh on 029 2047 1170, should you wish to do so.

Summary of policy

This policy outlines the:

- Characteristics of the marking methods we use for Exams and End-of-Module Assessments (EMAs)
- Circumstances when we use these marking methods
- Quality assurance processes for these marking methods, including second marking and monitoring.

Scope

What this policy covers

Marking arrangements for Exams and EMAs for:

- Undergraduate modules
- Taught Postgraduate modules
- Short courses
- Microcredentials

What this policy does not cover

Marking arrangements for:

- Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs)
- End-of-Module Tutor-Marked Assignments (emTMAs)

- Interactive Computer-Marked Assignments (iCMAs)
 - Interactive Computer-Marked Exams (iCMEs)
 - Postgraduate research degrees
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The Open University Student Charter Values

The [Student Charter](#) was developed jointly by The Open University and the OU Students Association. It is a declaration of our shared values and the commitments we make to each other. This document has been developed with the Student Charter values as its foundation.

Introduction

The Open University uses a range of assessment types which allow you to demonstrate your knowledge and skills. Marking is the process by which your work is evaluated against the assessment criteria on your module to determine your level of achievement.

This policy covers the marking of Exams and EMAs, and the steps that are taken to ensure that marking is fair and consistent.

A [Glossary](#) is included to explain any terms that may be unfamiliar to you. Throughout this document, where you see references to 'we', 'us', or 'our' this means The Open University. 'You' refers to you as the Student.

Policy

1. Purpose

This policy:

- defines the different marking methods we use for marking Exams and EMAs.
- clarifies when we use these different marking methods.
- identifies exceptions which allow us to use these marking methods when they would not normally be expected or permitted.

2. Policy principles

- 2.1 Exams and EMAs are final assessed tasks which contribute to your overall final result on a module.
- 2.2 Marking is the process by which we consider and appraise the work you submit for an assessed task against the learning outcomes of the module so that the knowledge, understanding and skills that you have acquired and demonstrated can be evaluated.
- 2.3 The Open University uses three distinct types of marking on modules with an Exam or an EMA. These are:
- Single Marking and Monitoring (SMM)
 - Selective Double Marking (SDM)
 - Full Double Marking (FDM)
- 2.4 We subject our marking practices and outcomes to analysis and scrutiny to ensure that academic standards are maintained and that all students are treated fairly, equitably and consistently.
- 2.5 We mark in line with the requirements and expectations of any relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.
- 2.6 Whichever marking method is used on a particular module will be applied to all the [scripts](#) submitted.

3. Marking methods used for Exams and EMAs

- 3.1 Single Marking and Monitoring
- Scripts are marked by a single, independent marker.
 - A [monitor](#), known as a [team leader](#), then monitors a minimum number or percentage of each marker's scripts.

3.2 Selective Double Marking

- Scripts are marked by an independent first marker.
- A second marker also marks a minimum number or percentage of each first marker's scripts.
- Second markers are not aware of the scores awarded by first markers as all marking is allocated before marking starts.

3.3 Full Double Marking

- All scripts are marked by two separate markers.
 - The first marker is normally your tutor.
 - The second marker is an independent marker.
 - Second markers are not aware of first marker scores as all marking is allocated before marking starts.
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4. How standards are maintained

- 4.1 Markers and members of the module team meet before the marking starts to discuss the marking guide and agree their approach. This is called [Coordination](#).
- 4.2 We assure the quality of our marking by monitoring or double marking, together with statistical analysis.
- 4.3 The [Module Results Panel](#) (MRP) supervises the marking of your work and arranges [Standardisation](#).
- 4.4 If a marker is found to have marked inconsistently within the scripts allocated to them, all their scripts must be re-marked by another marker or member of the Module Team.

Procedure

5. Single Marking and Monitoring

- 5.1 Single Marking and Monitoring involves first marking by an independent marker. A minimum of 15 per cent or 15 scripts from each marker are monitored by a [monitor](#), known as a [team leader](#). Monitoring is completed within the marking period.
- 5.2 All markers and monitors attend a [Coordination](#) exercise or, where this is not possible, are briefed by the [Module Team Chair](#) before marking commences.
- 5.3 The monitor reviews the marked scripts and prepares a qualitative report to identify whether each marker is marking as expected or whether they vary from the expected standard of marking.
- 5.4 At [Standardisation](#), the [MRP](#) reviews analytical, statistical reports to help them decide if any marking adjustments are required or to identify any scripts that should be remarked.
- 5.5 Where issues are raised during Monitoring, they are resolved at Standardisation and taken forward for staff development.

When Single Marking and Monitoring is used

- 5.6 Single Marking and Monitoring is typically used for modules with an Exam. However, it may also be used for modules which have an EMA with a word count of 2,000 words or fewer.

6. Selective Double Marking

- 6.1 Selective Double Marking involves first and second marking by different markers. All markers involved in Selective Double Marking are independent. This means that they are either tutors on the module or suitably experienced markers. They are not the tutor of the student whose work they are marking.
- 6.2 All markers attend a [Coordination](#) exercise, which is where they meet with members of the module team before marking starts to discuss the marking guide and agree

their approach. Where attendance is not possible, markers are briefed by the [Module Team Chair](#) before marking commences.

- 6.3 Each marker undertakes both first marking of a selection of scripts and second marking of a selection of scripts which are being first marked by other markers.
- 6.4 Scripts are allocated for first and second marking simultaneously. Markers do not know which of the scripts that they first marked are being second marked by others. Nor do they know whether they are marking the scripts as a first or second marker.
- 6.5 A minimum of ten per cent or ten scripts, whichever is greater, from each first marker are second marked.
- 6.6 Typically, each first marker's scripts to be second marked are divided equally among five different second markers.
- 6.7 Marker performance is analysed at [Standardisation](#) which is carried out by the [MRP](#). The MRP uses a variety of statistical reports which allow comparisons between markers who have marked the same scripts. These comparisons help to identify whether adjustments should be made to any marks. Where adjustments are deemed necessary, they are applied to all the marks awarded by a particular marker.
- 6.8 If a marker is found to be inconsistent all their scripts will be re-marked. Very occasionally this may delay the release of some results. For more information, see the Standardisation section in the [Module Results Determination policy](#).

When Selective Double Marking is used

- 6.9 Ordinarily, Selective Double Marking is used for modules with EMAs with a word count of 3,000 words or fewer.
- 6.10 Selective Double Marking can only be used where the number of EMA submissions and markers is sufficiently large. This is to enable robust statistical comparison between markers to maintain consistency and standards of marking.

Variation on the Selective Double Marking method

- 6.11 A variant of Selective Double Marking is Selective Double Marking by the [MRP](#). In this variant, all second marking is undertaken by members of the MRP.

- 6.12 This variant can be used if the number of students on a module isn't large enough to enable Selective Double Marking.

Exceptions to rules on the use of Selective Double Marking

- 6.13 If the number of students on a module using Selective Double Marking drops significantly then the marking method is expected to change to Selective Double Marking by [MRP](#) or Independent Full Double Marking, which is a variant of Full Double Marking (see 7.6).

7. Full Double Marking

- 7.1 Full Double Marking is where all scripts are marked twice, usually by your tutor as a first marker and by an independent second marker.
- 7.2 Markers attend a [Coordination](#) exercise, which is where they meet with members of the module team before marking starts to discuss the marking guide and agree their approach. Where attendance is not possible, markers are briefed by the [Module Team Chair](#) before marking commences.
- 7.3 Before marking commences, the module team determine how the final score is calculated. This could be first marker score, second marker score, or, most commonly, an average of the two.
- 7.4 Significant differences between first- and second-marker scores are resolved through a process of third marking, which is usually carried out by a member of the Module Team. The third marker's score is final.
- 7.5 Third marking is mandatory where:
- the difference between the first marker score and the second marker score is 15 or more percentage points, or
 - the scores given by the first marker and the second marker fall either side of the pass/fail boundary for the module.

Variations on the Full Double Marking method

- 7.6 A variant of Full Double Marking is Independent Full Double Marking, where neither the first nor second marker is your tutor. This may be appropriate where a module changes from Selective Double Marking after the module start date. In this situation, tutors would not be expecting to mark their own students' work so Independent Full Double Marking is the appropriate alternative marking method.

When Full Double Marking is used

- 7.7 Full Double Marking is used for modules with EMAs with a word count greater than 3,000 words, or where there is a high likelihood of significant variance between students' scripts, such as independent projects or creative writing assignments.
- 7.8 Independent Full Double Marking is most often used where modules need to change from Selective Double Marking to Full Double Marking due to a fall in student numbers to fewer than 250. (See 6.13)

Exceptions to rules on the use of Full Double Marking

- 7.9 An alternative process to third marking scripts is moderation. Moderation is a process by which both the first and second markers meet to discuss the marks awarded to the assignment and agree on a final mark. If the markers cannot arrive at an agreement over the final mark, the script will be third marked.
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8. Specialist and Central Marking

- 8.1 Specialist Marking is where specific questions within a script are marked by markers with different specialisms. This is typically used where the content of the assignment is particularly complex or requires specialist knowledge. Specialist Marking is normally single marked and monitored for Exams or full double marked for EMAs.
- 8.2 Central Marking is where marking is undertaken by members of the Module Team, sometimes together with tutors.
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9. Marking for resits and resubmissions

- 9.1 Resit and resubmission scripts are normally single marked and monitored by members of the Module Team. If members of the Module Team are not available,

exceptionally, resit and resubmission scripts may be marked by a suitably experienced tutor.

- 9.2 If resit or resubmission scripts are being marked by more than one marker, a Coordination exercise must take place before marking commences.
- 9.3 If the marking of resit and resubmission scripts is conducted solely by the Chair of the MRP, the marking must also be scrutinised by a separate member of the Module Team. This is to ensure marking is independently verified because the Chair of the MRP is responsible for rewarding result outcomes under the [Chair's Action](#) process.
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10. Methods of appeal

Module Result Checks

- 10.1 If you have evidence that an error has been made in determining your module result, you can query it by completing a [module result check form](#), available on the Help Centre.
- 10.2 You must submit the result check form, along with the appropriate evidence, to arrive **within 28 calendar days of the date of the release of your module result**. Module result checks cannot be dealt with by phone.
- 10.3 You should read the guidance provided carefully before deciding to submit a request for a module result check. The chances of your module result being incorrect are extremely small.
- 10.4 You are not able to request re-marking/reconsideration of any assessed task, or acceptance of a EMA that was submitted late, unless you have evidence of an error in processing your assessed task.
- 10.5 Please note that it is not possible to obtain more detailed information about your performance and we are not able to return exam scripts or other assessed work to you.

Queries or problems with our application of this policy

- 10.6 If you have a query or experience a problem with any aspect of The Open University's application of this policy, please [contact us](#).

- 10.7 If you feel that the Open University has not responded appropriately to your policy query or concern, you can raise a formal complaint or appeal using the [Students Complaints and Appeals Procedure](#). You can find more information about how to do this in The OU's [Complaints and Appeals](#) pages in the Help Centre.
- 10.8 The Open University also has a specific complaints procedure for complaints relating to Welsh Language Standards. Please refer to [Welsh Language Standards, Dealing with Complaints and Comments](#) for more details.
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11. Marking assignments through the medium of Welsh

- 11.1 You have a right to submit work through the medium of Welsh. While we will look to find a Welsh-speaking tutor to mark the work, we may also translate the text to English via an external translation company, for non-Welsh speaking tutors to mark. When this happens, you may ask to check the translated work before it is marked. More details on how this process works is outlined in the [Assessment through the medium of Welsh policy](#).

Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at The Open University

Our commitment to equality and inclusion is embedded in all that we do and reflects our mission to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. We celebrate diversity and the strengths that it brings, whilst challenging under-representation and differences in outcomes within our institution.

We promote and manage equality and diversity to meet both our strategic goals and our statutory equality duties. We achieve this in many ways including the development of inclusive policy.

Safe Space Reporting

The Open University is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment in which everyone feels safe and is treated with dignity and respect. Unlawful discrimination of any kind across The Open University will not be tolerated. Safe Space Reporting is available through [an online tool](#) through which staff, students, learners and visitors are encouraged to report incidents of assault, bullying, harassment, hate crime, or sexual harassment. It also provides information about what you can do if these incidents happen to you, or to someone you know, and where you can find support.

Glossary

Coordination

Coordination is where markers and members of the module team meet before the marking starts to discuss the marking guide and agree their approach.

Chair's Action

Chair's Action is the procedure by which the Module Result Panel Chair can make decisions on behalf of the Module Result Panel without the need to convene a full Module Result Panel Award Meeting. Chair's Action is only used for resits or resubmissions with fewer than 25 students.

End-of-Module Assessment (EMA)

An End-of-Module Assessment is one of the final assessed tasks within a module. On many modules, you have to produce an extended piece of work (such as an essay, project, portfolio, or dissertation) rather than sitting an Exam at the end of your study. For ease of reference, these assessments are referred to collectively as End-of-Module Assessments (EMAs).

Exam (examination)

An Exam is a final assessed task used to assess your application of the knowledge and skills you have acquired on your module. The University holds a number of different types of Exams in Exam periods at the end of module presentations. Exams will be online and taken remotely. They are time restricted, and their duration and their format varies by module.

First marking

All scripts are marked by a first marker who is usually your tutor. Depending on the marking method, the first marker may be your tutor, or it may be another, independent tutor. The quality of the marking completed by a first marker is assured through monitoring or through statistical comparison with a second marker. First and second marking is completed simultaneously.

Independent marker

Independent markers are tutors on the module who are not the tutor of the student whose work they are marking.

Marking guide

Marking guides are confidential documents which provide module- and question-specific guidance for markers.

Marking period

The marking period is the period between the final Exam date or the final submission date for EMAs and Standardisation.

Module Result Panel (MRP)

The Module Result Panel (MRP) is responsible for the setting and marking of all controlled assessments for each presentation of a specific module, and for proposing a result for each student on a module presentation. The panel is made up of a Chair and at least two internal examiners. Panel members must be appropriately qualified and, in most cases, will be members of our academic staff.

Module Result Panel (MRP) Chair

The MRP Chair is a senior academic with responsibility for ensuring that the MRP is constituted according to our regulations and for leading all meetings associated with the activities of the MRP. The MRP Chair may be required to monitor marking, act as a first point of contact for marker queries and report back on marker performance. They are also responsible for the determination of any unresolved student results under Chair's Action.

Module Team Chair

The Module Team Chair is the senior academic on the module who has the responsibility of providing academic leadership to ensure the coherence, cohesion and quality of the learning experience offered by the module within the Qualification(s) it belongs to. They have overall responsibility for the work of the module team and the setting and maintenance of academic standards.

Monitor

Monitors are team leaders who review a proportion of the scripts that have been first marked by an independent first marker to assure the quality of the marking.

Monitoring

Monitoring is a process in which a proportion of the scripts that have been first marked by an independent first marker are reviewed to assure the quality of the marking.

Scripts

Scripts are the hand-written or typed documents containing your response to the question or questions posed in an Exam or for an EMA. You submit scripts to be marked by us.

Second marking

Second marking is one of the quality assurance mechanisms that we use when assessing your work. Depending on the marking method, second marking may take place for all scripts or for a specified proportion of scripts. Second markers are usually independent tutors (i.e. not your own tutor). First and second marking is completed simultaneously.

Senate Guidelines

Senate is the academic authority of The Open University. The Senate Guidelines are the range of Senate-determined result statuses that are available at the University. The Senate Guidelines stipulate that the achievement of certain scores will guarantee a particular mandatory result outcome, but they also afford MRPs the discretion within certain limits to lower boundaries, as required.

Standardisation

Standardisation is one of a number of quality assurance activities that must take place as part of the process of awarding module results. A variety of reports are used at Standardisation to analyse the consistency of markers in relation to each other. For double-marked modules, reports also enable comparison between first and second markers who have marked the same scripts. Where necessary, adjustments can be made at Standardisation to ensure that standards of marking are consistent.

Team leader

In the context of this policy, a team leader is normally a member of the Module Team, although this role may sometimes be carried out by an experienced tutor. In most circumstances, a team leader monitors, but does not mark, scripts. If there is a situation in which a team leader is required to mark scripts, their marking will be monitored by a different team leader.

Related Documentation

Refer to the following documentation in conjunction with this document:

- [Academic Conduct Policy](#)
- [Advocacy Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policies](#)
- [Assessment through the medium of Welsh](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1995](#) for Northern Ireland
- [Equality Act 2010](#) in England, Scotland and Wales
- [Module Results Determination Policy](#)
- [Special Circumstances Policy](#)
- [Student Privacy Notice](#)

Further clarification

If you have any queries around the content provided within this document and how to interpret it, please contact your Student Support Team via StudentHome who are specially trained to advise on the implementation of policy. Alternatively, you can contact your Student Support Team through the 'Contact Us' option on the [Help Centre](#) if you are a current Open University student.

Apprentices studying as part of an apprenticeship programme should contact the appropriate Apprenticeship Enrolment and Support Team (AEST) or equivalent contact, for more information; alternatively, they should request their employer contacts their named Apprenticeship Programme Delivery Manager (APDM) for further information, see contacts section below for more information.

If you have any comments about this policy document and how it might be improved, please submit these to SPR-Policy-Team@open.ac.uk.

Contact details for further information

Your Student Support Team

Your Student Support Team phone number and email contact can be found on [StudentHome](#) or [Your contacts](#) section of the Help Centre.

If you are an apprenticeship learner, please contact the Apprentice Enrolment and Support Team, AEST, using the following details:

Apprenticeship Enrolment and Support Team (AEST) (for apprentices in England, Scotland and Wales)

Email: apprentice-support@open.ac.uk

Telephone: 0300 3034121

For Apprentices in Northern Ireland your most appropriate contact may be your Staff Tutor, Education Manager, or Faculty Co-ordinator.

Students living in Wales can speak with a student support adviser in Welsh on 029 2047 1170, should you wish to do so.

Your Nation Office

To check the latest postal addresses and other contact details or if you would like to find out more about our most up-to-date response times for receiving and sending postal correspondence to The Open University, please see [Open University offices](#).

If you are a Student in Ireland, Wales or Scotland please contact your Nation Office:

The Open University in Ireland

110 Victoria Street

Belfast

BT1 3GN

Phone +44 (0)28 9032 3718

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CF10 1AP

Phone +44 (0)29 2047 1170

Email wales@open.ac.uk

Os rydych yn siarad Cymraeg a fyddai'n I siaradwyr Cymraeg

well gennych trafod eich anghenion drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r Brifysgol Agored yng Nghymru yng Nghaerdydd os gwelwch yn dda

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Feedback

If you have any comments about this policy document and how it might be improved, please submit these to SPR-Policy-Team@open.ac.uk.

Summary of significant changes since last version

This is a new policy.

Policies superseded by this document

This is a new policy written in 2024 for students. It supports understanding about the marking process for Exams and EMAs. The policy has previously been available to Open University staff only.

Document information

- Version number: 1.0
 - Approved by: The Director, Academic Services
 - Effective from: 1 August 2024
 - Date for review: August 2025
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Charity Statement

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.