Policy on Marking Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Assessments

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Purpose
This document provides policy for staff to follow in developing a consistent approach to the handling of marks for individual summative assessments and for total module marks. It outlines how marks should be recorded, released to students, prepared for, and ratified by Boards of Examiners prior to their approved module result being returned to Student Business for dissemination.
Scope
This policy must be read by staff involved in the marking of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students submitted work and the return of marks and feedback to students following submission. This policy must also be read by Boards of Examiners and External Examiners.

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Introduction

1. Accuracy in marking and fairness in the way all students are assessed is crucial to ensuring a high-quality degree in which students, employers and postgraduate selectors can have confidence. The marking of all summative assessments must be in alignment with published assessment criteria and appropriate standards. The University's position on marking and feedback is outlined in the Assessment and Feedback Policy.
2. This Policy aims to support staff when developing marking criteria to assess individual undergraduate and postgraduate taught assessments, including postgraduate research programmes. This approach to marking is commonly referred to as 'criteria-referenced', where individual assessments are assessed against explicit criteria. The University does not permit the alternative 'norm-referenced' approach to marking, where a fixed proportion (or narrow range of proportions) of students are awarded grades within each grade band.
3. Individual assessments must be graded using one of the two scales below, Type A (the full 100 point percentage scale) or Type B (a restricted percentage scale), dependent on the type of assessment. Markers must take account of the performance descriptor (underlined in the table below) at each band, and the wording of feedback must align with the descriptor for the selected performance level.

Scope

4. This Policy relates to the marking of individual assessments, and not to the aggregate marks returned for modules. Staff will need to supplement this Policy or provide alternative detailed assessment criteria or rubrics that align to the learning outcomes being assessed at the level of study, so that students understand the criteria by which their work is assessed. This must be done in ways that clearly demonstrate equivalence and with an approach to marking that is consistent with this Policy.
5. This document must be read in conjunction with the Assessment and Feedback Policy.

Type A: Numerically based assessments and assessments with short answers

6. Where assessments are numerical in nature, or where there are questions with each answer attracting a small number of marks, the full 0-100 percentage point marking scale should be used. This type of assessment is common where there is a clear correct and incorrect answer (e.g. multiple-choice examinations and some assessments in Science, Engineering, and Languages may pose questions with answers that are correct or incorrect, and using the 100 point percentage marking scale is therefore meaningful). The Type A scale may also be meaningful for assessments where the total number of marks that can be awarded is less than 100, and where the mark is then converted to the full percentage scale.

Type B: Other assessments

7. Where an assessment cannot be categorised as Type A, such that there is no clear correct and incorrect answer, and instead it may be the quality of analysis and argument that are assessed (e.g. extended writing tasks), marking should be conducted using the Type B scale, which is a restricted percentage scale.

8. The aim of employing this Type B restricted percentage marking scale, is to improve the accuracy, reliability and transparency of the academic judgement of these forms of assessments. This means that the difference between each point on the marking scale can be more meaningfully described and evaluated. For example, the difference between a mark of 62 and 65 can be more consistently articulated by markers than the difference between a mark of 64 and 65, for such assessments. As a result, the use of the Type B scale for such assessments improves the reliability of this marking relative to the Type A scale.

9. Staff may use the Type B scale to holistically judge the quality of a student's work in line with the relevant assessment criteria, or they may use the scale to develop marking rubrics that clearly describe the quality of work at different levels of attainment for each criterion separately. Where staff use such marking rubrics to assess students' work, the Type B scale can be applied at the level of assessing attainment against individual criteria (e.g. quality of argument, use of evidence) included in the rubric. This may result in an overall mark for an assessment that is not included within the Type B scale. This is acceptable, since the scale is applied at the level of assessing attainment against each assessment criterion. Appendix 1 shows examples of assessment strategies using Type A and/or Type B scales.

10. Where numerical marks are not appropriate, marks may be returned on a pass/fail basis, subject to approval by the relevant Faculty's Vice Dean (Academic).

11. The table below contains descriptors for marks within the Type A and Type B scales.

Class	**Type A**	**Type B**	**Descriptor**
UG: First **PG: Distinction**	90 - 100	100, 92	**<u>Exceptional demonstration of the learning outcomes</u>** Exceptional in most or every respect, the work demonstrates all the characteristics noted for First class in the Outstanding range below and is also well beyond the level expected of a highly competent student at their level of study and could not be bettered for the level of study.
	80 - 89	84	**<u>Outstanding demonstration of the learning outcomes</u>** Outstanding in most respects, the work is what might be expected of a highly competent student at their level of study. The work demonstrates most of the following attributes: • A breadth of appropriate and focussed knowledge, and a deep and critical understanding of the subject matter. • An outstanding standard of synthesis and evaluation, and a critical and insightful analysis. • Complexity of thought, creativity, insight and/or originality.

			• Evidence of comprehensive reading and thought of significant complexity and well beyond, but still relevant to, module/assignment materials. • Outstanding use of references and exemplars, well beyond, but still relevant to, module /assignment materials. • An outstanding standard of writing and communication and/or presentation, that is clearly and logically structured.
	70 - 79	78, 75, 72	**<u>Excellent demonstration of the learning outcomes</u>** Excellent in most respects, the work is what might be expected of a very competent student at their level of study. The work demonstrates: • Wide, appropriate and focussed knowledge and critical understanding of the subject matter. • An excellent standard of synthesis and evaluation and/or shows critical and insightful analysis. • Some complexity of thought, insight and/or originality. • Evidence of comprehensive reading and thought beyond course/assignment materials. • Excellent use of references and exemplars. • An excellent standard of writing and communication and/or presentation, that is clearly and logically structured.
UG: Upper second **PG: Merit**	60 - 69	High 2.1: 68, Mid 2.1: 65, Low 2.1: 62	**<u>Comprehensive demonstration of the learning outcomes</u>** Very good or good in most respects for the level of study in displaying attainment of the learning outcomes, with marks at the higher end of this scale reflecting stronger and more consistent attainment of the learning outcomes. This work demonstrates: • A very good or good level of appropriate knowledge and critical understanding of the subject matter, with only occasional lapses in detail. • Very good or good synthesis, analysis, reflection, understanding and/or critical evaluation. • Evidence of reading and thought beyond course/assignment materials. • Appropriate use of references and exemplars. • A good standard of writing and communication and/or presentation, that is clearly and logically structured.
UG: Lower second **PG: Pass**	50 - 59	High 2.2: 58, Mid 2.2: 55,	**<u>Satisfactory demonstration of the learning outcomes:</u>** The work is satisfactory for the level of study and clearly meets the requirements for demonstrating the relevant learning outcomes. Marks at the higher end of this scale reflect stronger and more

		Low 2.2: 52	consistent attainment of the learning outcomes for this standard of work. The work demonstrates: • Satisfactory knowledge and a reasonable understanding of the essential material. • Weaknesses in the synthesis and/or analysis, reflection, understanding and critical evaluation of material, resulting in parts of the work being overly descriptive in nature. • General accuracy with occasional mistakes and/or reduced focus on the main issue or lapses in detail. • Limited evidence of reading and thought beyond course/assignment materials. • A satisfactory standard of writing and communication and/or presentation, where there may be weaknesses in the clarity and/or structure of the work. • Appropriate use of references and exemplars, though there may be minor flaws in the referencing technique.
UG: Third **PG: Fail**	40 – 49	High 3rd: 48 Mid 3rd: 45, Low 3rd: 42	ASSESSMENTS AT YEARS 1-4: **Limited demonstration of the learning outcomes.** ASSESSMENTS AT YEAR 5 & PGT LEVEL: **Unsatisfactory demonstration of the learning outcomes.** The work meets the minimum requirements for demonstrating the relevant learning outcomes for the level of study in years 1 to 4, but not at year 5 and PGT level. Marks at the higher end of this scale reflect stronger and more consistent attainment of the learning outcomes for this standard of work, although ultimately insufficiently at year 5 and PGT level. The work demonstrates: • Basic knowledge and understanding. • A weak argument which is not logically structured, or which lacks clarity or is based on unsubstantiated statements. • No relevant critical analysis. • Insufficient evidence of reading and thought beyond course/assignment materials. • Poor organisation and/or presentation. • A lack of references and exemplars.
UG: Fail **PG: Fail**	30 - 39	38, 35, 32	ASSESSMENTS AT YEARS 1-4 **Marginal fail: Inadequate demonstration of the learning outcomes** ASSESSMENTS AT YEAR 5 & PGT LEVEL: **Inadequate demonstration of the learning outcomes**

			The work fails to meet the minimum requirements for demonstrating the relevant learning outcomes for the level of study. Marks at the higher end of this scale reflect stronger and more consistent attainment of the learning outcomes within this range of marks. The work demonstrates: • An insufficient level of knowledge and understanding. • A poorly structured, poorly developed, or incoherent argument, or no argument at all. • An awkward writing style or poor expression of concepts. • A lack of familiarity with the subject and/or assessment method • Insufficient evidence of reading and thought beyond module/assessment materials. • A lack of references and exemplars.
	20 - 29	20	**Clear fail: Weak demonstration of the learning outcomes** The work is very weak or shows a decided lack of effort. The work demonstrates: • Very poor or confused knowledge and understanding, with reference to only a few key words, phrases or key ideas. • No argument or one based on irrelevant and erroneous content • Irrelevant content and extensive omissions. • Weaknesses of presentation and/or logic and/or evidence. • Inadequate evidence of learning. • Incomplete or inadequately presented references, if any.
	1 - 19	10	**Minimal demonstration of the learning outcomes** The work is extremely weak. The work demonstrates: • No knowledge or understanding of the area in question. • Incomplete, muddled, and/or irrelevant material. • Irrelevant or little content, extensive omissions. • Weaknesses of presentation and/or logic and/or evidence. • Deficient evidence of learning. • Incomplete or inadequately presented references, if any.
	0	0	No relevant work submitted for assessment

Appendix 1. Examples of assessment strategies using Type A and/or Type B scales.

12. These examples illustrate the application of Type A and/or B marking scales to assess students' work, and how the marks awarded for each individual assessment contribute to aggregate module marks.

13. The table below shows an example assessment strategy for a module with one assessment marked using the Type B scale and one assessment marked using the Type A scale.

Assessment	Weighting	Marking scale	Mark awarded
Essay	50%	Type B	68%
MCQ Exam	50%	Type A	38/50, returned to student as 76%
Module aggregate mark	100%		72%

14. The table below shows an example assessment strategy for a module with two assessments marked using the Type B scales.

Assessment	Weighting	Marking scale	Mark awarded
Essay	40%	Type B	65%
Research proposal	60%	Type B	78%
Module aggregate mark	100%		73%

15. The table below shows an example assessment strategy for a module with two assessments marked using the Type A scales.

Assessment	Weighting	Marking scale	Mark awarded
Lab report	50%	Type A	48%
Examination (short answers + MCQ)	50%	Type A	43%
Module aggregate mark	100%		46%

16. The table below shows an example assessment strategy for a module with one assessment marked using the Type A scale and one assessment marked using the Type B scale.

Assessment	Weighting	Marking scale	Mark awarded
Research ethics application	50%	Type A (clearly defined marking scale or rubric with mark out of 30, converted to a percentage)	18/30, returned to student as 60%
Research proposal	50%	Type B	68%
Module aggregate mark	100%		64%