

## **Appendix B: Verification of marks for undergraduate and postgraduate taught awards**

1. Verification is the process through which the University assures itself that the marks awarded are fair, and represent an accurate assessment of student performance against the unit Learning Outcomes. It provides confidence that assessment is consistent and reliable.
2. It is a fundamental principle of the University's assessment process that assessment must be complete, and a final mark agreed, before any marks or feedback is shared with the student. The Unit Leader is responsible for confirming the mark on any unit. The purpose of verification is to ensure that these marks are accurate prior to be published.
3. Verification may be undertaken in three specific ways:

### *Team marking*

- 3.1 Team marking is most commonly used to confirm the marks for large project units, generally at Levels 6 or 7. A team of three or more assessors, led by the Unit Leader, reviews the work and comes together to agree the final mark. The team will discuss the merits of each assignment, and agree a mark and the key points for summative feedback, which will be overseen by the Unit Leader. As more than two assessors have confirmed their satisfaction with the marks awarded, no further verification is required.

### *Second marking*

- 3.2 Second marking occurs when a second assessor reviews all the work submitted for a unit, and reaches their own judgement on the mark which should be awarded. This is then compared against the view of the lead assessor. Where there is a disparity between the marks, the two assessors should meet and agree the final mark. (Exceptionally, where they are unable to agree a final mark, a third assessor may be used, at the discretion and appointment of the Course/Award Leader). The role of the second assessor is to confirm the marks, or to raise concerns about either standards or consistency.

### *Sampling*

- 3.3 Sampling is similar to second marking, except that the second assessor only reviews a sample of the work, to assure themselves that marking is fair and consistent. The details of the sample should be agreed between the two assessors, subject to the parameters in paragraph 4 below. If there is any concern about the standards being applied, or the consistency of approach, this is likely to result in a review of the work for the whole cohort. Sampling is also common where there is a large number of students, and initial assessment may be shared across a group of two or more assessors. The Unit Leader will then sample the assessments of each individual assessor to ensure that judgements are consistent across the cohort.

## 4. Parameters

- 4.1 The following parameters apply:
  - i) For units of 45 and 60 credits, at Levels 6 or 7, either team or second marking must be used.
  - ii) For units of 40 credits at Levels 5, 6 and 7, a minimum of 50% of the work in the unit must be reviewed, either through second marking or sampling.
  - iii) All work initially graded as Fail, and all work awarded a mark of 75% or above, must be reviewed, either through second marking or sampling.
  - iv) Overall, the following minimum levels of review apply:
  - v) At Level 7, a minimum of 50% of work across the year
  - vi) At Level 6, a minimum of 40% of work across the year; all units must be subject to some form of review in each academic year

- vii) At Level 5, a minimum of 25% of work across the year; each unit must be subject to review at least every two years
- viii) At Level 4, as marks do not contribute to the overall classification, there is no requirement for marks to be reviewed. However, it will commonly be used on new courses; where the lead assessor is a new member of staff; or where it is requested by the Course/Award Leader, for example in response to concerns which have been identified.

## 5. Practical matters

- 5.1 Course teams will need to judge how, with limited staff availability, they can conduct verification. This includes securing access to the work, for instance in the case of presentations or screenings. Some forward planning is often required to ensure that the process can be conducted efficiently; this may include the need for a second marker to sit in on a sample of presentations, for example, or for work to remain in place within a studio.
  - 5.2 Where possible and appropriate, the second marker can be from another degree team.
  - 5.3 Course/Award Leaders will oversee and review the verification process and are responsible to the Director for its efficient operation.
6. For completeness, it should be noted that the external examiner does not have a role in the assessment of work. The role of the external examiner is to review the marks awarded, and reach their own judgement about the appropriateness and consistency of internal assessment. Nevertheless, it is common to include in the external examiner's sample any work which has proved particularly challenging to assess (without bringing this fact to the external examiner's attention).