

ASSESSMENT MODERATION POLICY HE

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Higher Education Assessment Moderation Policy

1. PURPOSE OF POLICY

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to promote effective moderation to assure fair, consistent and reliable implementation of the assessment process.

The document identifies the scope, procedure, roles and responsibilities for the moderation of assessment at Nescot in the context of the overall arrangements necessary to plan and monitor assessment effectively at programme level. This updated policy has amalgamated the HE Assessment Verification Moderation Handbook (2016) and the HE Assessment Moderation Policy (2016).

2. SCOPE

2.1 Definitions

At Nescot the moderation of Higher Education assessment is described as follows;

- a. **Internal verification/moderation (IV/IM)**
 - Assessment tools and a sample of assessment decisions are moderated by an internal member of staff at Nescot College (i.e. another member of on the course team)
- b. **Double marking** (sometimes referred to as second marking)
 - Student work is independently assessed by more than one marker.
- c. **External Verification/ Moderations (EV/EM)**
 - A sample of work assessed and moderated by someone outside of Nescot (i.e. External Examiner)

2.2 Scope

Higher Education programmes offered at Nescot are subject to internal assessment moderation as follows;

- a. **Internal verification/moderation (IV/IM)**

Will be applied to;

 - All assessments prior to distribution to students
 - A planned sample of assessment decisions
- b. **Double marking** (sometimes referred to as second marking)

May be applied to;

 - Assessment decisions planned as appropriate to the subject, assessment method and the requirements of the validating/awarding body.

Exceptions to this will be short, full cost and/or provision where validation/awarding body partner arrangements specify otherwise. For example, in franchise provision where the arrangements with the validating partner stipulate that day-to-day management resides with the validating partner.

3. PROCEDURE (roles and responsibilities should be clearly allocated within the procedural narrative)

At Nescot internal verification/moderation is undertaken at two stages of the assessment process as follows;

- a. **Assessment tools** (e.g. assignment briefs and exam papers)

Internal verification/moderation to assure that;

 - assessment design enables students to demonstrate their achievement of the intended learning outcomes
 - marking criteria are clear and appropriate
 - level is appropriate and presentation is clear

- good academic conduct is encouraged through information about referencing and plagiarism

b. Assessment decisions

Internal verification/moderation or double marking to assure that;

- assessment of outcomes is fair, reliable and that assessment criteria have been applied consistently
- effective formative feedback is timely, of appropriate quality and promotes effective learning

Procedure

3.1 Each programme will have at least one named lead internal verifier/moderator.

3.2 Internal verifiers/moderators and double markers will carry out internal verification/moderation and double marking. Double marking should be used for projects and dissertations.

3.3 Standard College documentation will be used to record and evidence implementation of internal verification/moderation and double marking.

3.4 Assessment tools (e.g. assignment briefs, exam papers) will be internally verified/moderated prior to distribution to students.

3.5 Assessment decisions will be internally verified/moderated or double marked, as appropriate to the subject, assessment method and the requirements of the validating/awarding body, prior to distribution to students.

3.6 Assessors, internal verifiers/moderators and double markers will meet to support standardisation of assessment decisions, it is recommended that these meetings occur at least once each semester.

Roles and responsibilities

3.7 Director of Higher Education

Responsible for;

Overseeing the implementation and effectiveness of the quality assurance processes applied to Higher Education programmes across the College, including the internal verification/moderation and double marking procedures. In particular, this will include supporting effective assessment moderation through evaluation, reporting and recommendations in Annual Programme Review (APR), Module Enhancement Plans (MEPs) and Course Enhancement Plans (CEPs).

3.8 Academic Registrar

Responsible for;

Supporting each Head of Department in their effective management of the implementation of internal verification/moderation and double marking procedures applied to Higher Education programmes.

Providing staff development on this policy and each role within it.

3.9 Director of Faculty

Responsible for;

Overseeing the academic management of Departments within their Faculty, in the context of moderation of assessment this will include; supporting each Head of Department in their effective management of the implementation of internal verification/moderation and double marking procedures applied to Higher Education programmes.

3.10 Head of Department

Responsible for;

Ensuring the implementation and effectiveness of internal verification/moderation and double marking activity across their Department, in particular this will include ensuring that;

- Internal verifiers/moderators and double markers have appropriate academic and/or occupational expertise and clearly understand the content, structure and assessment requirements for the awards they are internally verifying/moderating or double marking.
- The appointment of appropriately experienced internal verifiers/moderators is timely.
- An agreed annual internal verification/moderation double marking timetable is in place and implemented for each programme.
- Appropriate and regular periods of time are set aside to ensure that internal verification/moderation and double marking take place in a timely manner.
- Internal verifiers/moderators have appropriate training to enable them to undertake their role.
- Assessors and internal verifiers/moderators are provided with timely support and advice.
- Assessors and internal verifiers/moderators have complete up-to-date awarding body documentation.
- Assessors adhere to agreed and appropriate assessment schedules which incorporate a suitable range of assessment methods, including appropriate arrangements for students with identified needs.
 - Issues identified through internal verification/moderation and double marking are addressed quickly and appropriately.
 - Where appropriate standardisation meetings take place to agree assessment decisions/marks, to support consistency of assessment/grading decisions and facilitate sharing of good practice.

3.11 Internal Verifier/Moderators

Responsible for;

Supporting a team of assessors to develop their assessment procedures and facilitate good practice. The internal verifier/moderator will monitor assessments by sampling and liaise with assessors to support them in their interpretation of national standards and awarding body requirements. It is expected that the internal verifier/moderator will provide advice to assessors to assure that assessment tools are fit for purpose, assessment decisions are appropriate and that feedback to students is linked to assessment criteria, promotes improved performance and is timely. In particular, the role includes;

- Agreeing with the Head of Department and implementing an effective internal verification/moderation/double marking sampling plan for the academic year which complies with College guidelines and those of the Awarding Body
- Checking that the assessment arrangements are effective and comply with Nescot policy and awarding body criteria.
- Ensuring, in liaison with programme coordinators and module/unit coordinators, all assignment briefs or assessments have been subject to a rigorous internal moderation/verification process using the agreed College system prior to distribution to students.
- Ensuring, in liaison with programme coordinators, module/unit coordinators and assessors, assessment decisions have been subject to a rigorous internal moderation/verification process in accordance with Nescot Internal Verification/Moderation Policy, The Internal Verification/Moderation and double marking handbook and agreed sampling levels, prior to assessment decisions/marks being issued to students.
- Reviewing marks where there are indications that reconsideration is necessary, for example borderlines or where there are significant differences in between marks within or between elements of a programme.

- Conducting, where appropriate, standardisation meetings to agree assessment decisions/marks, to support consistency of assessment/grading decisions and to facilitate sharing of good practice.
- Retaining Nescot documentation to evidence implementation of internal verification/moderation activity

3.12 Programme coordinators

Responsible for;

Co-ordinating and managing the assessment arrangements for the courses which they lead, in the context of internal moderation/verification this will include;

- Coordinating an appropriate assessment schedule with agreed internal verification/moderation dates and ensuring that this is available to the Internal verifiers/moderators and double markers to enable them to plan their activities effectively.
- Ensuring assessment tools and assessment decisions are readily available to internal verifiers/moderators and double markers enable them to undertake their role in a timely manner.
- Collating and coordinating all assessment evidence for the programme over each academic year, including evidence of internal verification/moderation/double marking.
- Maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of students' progress and achievements across the programme in accordance with awarding body and Nescot requirements. Records for individual students will include identification of learning support needs and requirements and any agreed adjustments to assessment in place to ensure that student needs are met.
- Retaining Nescot documentation to evidence implementation of internal verification/moderation and double marking activity
- Making the collated assessment evidence (above) available to the External Examiner at appropriate times throughout the academic year.
- Formally reporting about the effectiveness of internal verification/moderation and double marking applied to the programme at assessment and examination boards.
- Meeting with assessors and internal verifiers/moderators for the purpose of assessment standardisation, consistency and sharing good practice.

3.13 Assessors

Responsible for;

Developing appropriate assessment tools, reaching valid assessment decisions, and providing timely feedback to students for the units/modules/elements for which they have responsibility. To inform each of these activities' assessors will make reference to the programme specifications, awarding body requirements, validated aims, intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the unit/module being assessed. Reference will also be made to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, Subject Benchmarks, and the Quality Assurance Agency Codes of Practice, particularly Code of Practice 6; Assessment of Students. Particular responsibilities in the context of internal verification/moderation and double marking include;

- Timely preparation of assessment tools and assessment of submitted work in accordance with the agreed assessment schedule for the programme.
- Ensuring that assessment tools and assessment decisions are readily available to internal verifiers/moderators and double markers enable them to undertake their role in a timely manner.
- Maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of students' progress and achievements across the assessments for which they are responsible in accordance with awarding body and Nescot requirements
- Meet with other assessors and internal verifiers/moderators and double markers for the purpose of standardisation and sharing good practice.
- Undertaking the recommendations and actions identified by the internal verifier/moderator and/or double marker.

3.14 Double markers

Responsible for;

Assuring the fairness, reliability and consistency of the first assessor by marking the work to check overall standards and ensure that mark schemes have been applied. The reference points (above) which inform assessors will be used by double markers when making their judgments. Particular responsibilities in the context of internal verification/moderation and double marking include;

- Agreeing their double marking allocation with the Head of Department, internal verifier, programme coordinator, module/unit coordinators and assessors.
- Ensuring that assessment decisions are fair, reliable and consistent through double marking prior to assessment decisions/marks being issued to students.
- Reviewing marks where there are indications that reconsideration is necessary, for example those bordering a classification boundary or where there are significant differences in between marks of different assessors or within or between elements of a programme.
- Retaining Nescot documentation to evidence implementation of double marking
- Participating with other markers in moderation meetings and recording these meetings using the Nescot moderation meeting record.
- Maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of students' progress and achievements across the assessments for which they have double marking responsibility in accordance with awarding body and Nescot requirements

Meeting with other assessors, internal verifiers/moderators and double markers for the purpose of standardisation and sharing good practice.

4.0 Implementation

4.1 Internal verification/moderation

Internal verification/moderation will be;

- a. planned and agreed in advance
- b. applied to all assessment tools prior to distribution to students
- c. clearly evidenced using Nescot documentation
- d. applied to an agreed sample of assessment decisions as;
 - appropriate to both subject discipline and material being assessed
 - appropriate to the means of assessment used

4.2 The internal verifier/moderator will undertake the following key activities;

4.2.1 Preparation and implementation of an internal moderation/verification sampling plan

An internal verification/moderation sampling plan must be completed to ensure;

- a. The work of all assessors is subject to internal moderation/verification or double marking
- b. Increased levels of sampling are implemented for inexperienced assessors or those new to the programme
- c. All modules/units of a qualification are subject to internal moderation/verification and/or double marking
- d. Increased levels of sampling are implemented for new or revised modules/units
- e. The complete range of assessment methods employed on the programme are subject to internal moderation/verification e.g. projects, assignments, presentations, performance.
- f. The complete range of assessment locations are subject to internal moderation/verification e.g. work based, classroom, performance, location

- g. No internal verifier/moderator plans to verify any evidence which they have assessed
- h. Compliance with awarding body and Nescot procedure
- i. Evidence of planning for internal verification/moderation and double marking
- j. The sample size is sufficient to support sound judgements to be made about reliability.

Planning the sample size;

It is expected that the internal verification/moderation sampling plan will ensure that (as above) a full range of assessors, assessment practices and students are assessed across a programme. When planning sampling activities, the following characteristics must also be considered;

- o Type and number of candidates e.g. age, gender, ethnic origin, disability, special assessment needs
- o The number and experience of assessors contributing to module/unit/assessment

The minimum expectation is that;

- o New assessors will have 100% of their assessment decisions verified/moderated in the first academic year.
- o The minimum sample will be six items of assessed work for each assessment and in the course take into account the course of study and take into account the above characteristics.

4.2.2 Where the validating/awarding body expectations differ from Nescot guidance the validating/awarding body expectations must take precedence and their expectations must be met.

4.2.3 **Verification/moderation of assessment tools**

The Nescot HE IV/IM1 (for HNDs) or the validating body's internal verification/moderation of assignment brief must be completed to ensure;

- a. Assessment design enables students to demonstrate their achievement of the intended learning outcomes
- b. Assessment design is clearly presented and appropriate to level
- c. Assessment design is appropriate to the awarding body requirements for that qualification
- d. The assessment methodology is appropriate to the subject being assessed
- e. Good academic conduct is encouraged through information about plagiarism and acceptable referencing
- f. Marking criteria are clear and appropriate

4.2.4 **Verification/moderation of assessment decisions**

The Nescot HE IV/IM2 internal verification/moderation or the validating body's assessment decisions must be completed to ensure;

- a. Marking criteria are consistently and appropriately applied.
- b. Effective learning is promoted through timely formative feedback which is in an effective form and of appropriate quality
- c. Students who have identified special requirements for assessments have their needs met

4.2.5 **Providing constructive feedback to assessors**

The Nescot HE IV/IM1 and HE IV/IM2 internal verification/moderation forms or the validating body's forms must be completed to ensure;

- a. Individual assessors are able to develop their assessment practice
- b. The programme team is able to evaluate and further develop their assessment practice

- c. The Head of Department is able to support the assessment teams
- d. The Quality Office is able to identify and provide appropriate staff development activities

4.2.6 Assessor meetings

Enable internal verifiers/moderators and double markers to;

- a. Agree assessment decisions/marks
- b. Support consistency in assessment/grading
- c. Share good practice

For large programmes where this may usefully be formalised, the following agenda is suggested;

Meeting 1 August/September

- Agree assessment schedule including internal verification/moderation dates for the academic year
- Confirm assessors and internal verifiers/moderators/double markers for year
- Discuss any feedback which may impact upon assessment practice e.g. the external examiner report
- Agree assessment methods and tools for academic year
- Where possible verify/moderate a selected sample of assessment tools for academic year/semester 1, discuss inconsistencies and agree standards

Meeting 2 December/January

- Monitor assessment schedule progress for academic year
- Verify/moderate a selected sample of assessment decisions and feedback to students, discuss inconsistencies and agree standards
- Agree assessment tools for semester 2
- Verify/moderate assessment tools for academic year/semester 2
- Review quality of assessment and implementation of internal verification for semester 1

Meeting 3 February/March

- Monitor assessment schedule progress for academic year
- Verify/moderate a selected sample of assessment decisions and feedback to students, discuss inconsistencies and agree standards

Meeting 4 May/June/July

- Verify/moderate a selected sample of assessment decisions and feedback to students, discuss inconsistencies and agree standards
- Review quality of assessment and implementation of internal verification for semester 2

4.3 Double marking

4.3.1 Double marking will be;

- a. planned and agreed in advance
- b. be clearly evidenced, through documentation from both markers on a separate sheet and a moderation meeting record.
- c. applied to an agreed sample of assessment decisions as;
 - appropriate to both subject discipline and material being assessed
 - appropriate to the means of assessment used

4.3.2 Double marking must be used where the regulations of the awarding body and/or the validated document specify this method. The sample size must be as specified in the validated document/regulations of the awarding body.

4.3.3 Double marking may be used, as appropriate, in conjunction with internal verification/moderation in modules which include more than one method of

assessment e.g. examinations, assignments, performance, projects and dissertations.

4.4 The double marker will undertake their role using one of the following double marking models;

Either of the forms of double marking below may be applied according to the nature of the assessment and the requirements of the validating/awarding body.

4.4.1 Blind double marking;

- a. No notes or marks are made on the work during assessment by the first assessor
- b. Double marking takes place independent of any discussion or annotations from the first assessor
- c. First assessor and double marker retain separate records of all marks awarded together with their comments and the rationale for awarding each mark
- d. First assessor and double marker compare marks and resolve any differences to reach an agreed mark. Assessors must record the key points of their meeting using the assessment moderation record HE AM1.
- e. Agreed marks and comments are then entered and the assessment returned to the student.
- f. If differences between first assessor and double marker cannot be resolved a third marker is employed. The marks compared and differences resolved to reach an agreed mark. Assessors must record the key points of their meeting using the assessment moderation record HE AM1.

4.4.2 Double/second marking

- a. The first assessor writes comments and marks on the work.
- b. Double marking takes place with sight of this information.
- c. The double marker enters their comments and marks on the work.
- d. First assessor and double marker retain records of all marks awarded together with their comments and the rationale for awarding each mark
- e. First assessor and double marker compare marks, discuss rationale, resolve any differences, and enter agreed marks and comments onto the work prior to returning the assessment to the student. Assessors must record the key points of their meeting using the assessment moderation record HE AM1.
- f. If differences between first assessor and double marker cannot be resolved a third marker is employed. The marks compared and differences resolved to reach an agreed mark. Assessors must record the key points of their meeting using the assessment moderation record HE AM1.

Written comments by the first examiner may make double marking easier by guiding the double/second marker. This method is frequently used when supporting inexperienced assessors or when several first markers are involved in an assessment.

4.4.3 Resolving differences in double marking

Differences must be resolved. The method of resolving differences between assessors will be as follows regardless of which of the above methods of double marking is employed;

- a. First assessor and double marker meet discuss and negotiate all aspects of difference and reach an agreed mark.
- b. Where differences cannot be resolved by discussion and negotiation a further marker must be employed.
- c. In all cases assessors must record the key points of their meeting using the assessment moderation record HE AM1.

- d. The external examiner should not be asked to resolve differences between assessors.

5. DOCUMENTATION

5.1 Nescot documentation must be used to record internal verification/moderation activities. If the awarding body or the particular needs of a programme demand customised or different documentation these forms will be available on SharePoint. Nescot's documents are as follows;

- a. **HE IV/IM 1**

Internal verification/moderation of assignment brief

Record of verification/moderation of each assessment/assignment brief, including comment and feedback to the assessor and identification any necessary amendments. The internal verifier/moderator will retain a completed copy and provide a copy to;

- the individual Assessor
- the Programme Coordinator

- b. **HE IV/IM 2**

Internal verification/moderation of assessment decisions

Record of verification/moderation of each assessment decision, including the internal verifier/moderators comment with feedback to the assessor and identification any necessary amendments. The internal verifier/moderator will retain a completed copy and provide a copy to;

- the individual Assessor
- the Programme Coordinator

- c. **HE AM 1**

Assessment moderation record

Record of the moderation meeting between first and second marker and, where necessary, the third marker. The markers will retain a completed copy of the assessment moderation record and provide a copy to;

- The Programme Coordinator

- d. **Programme assessment schedule**

The programme assessment schedule which shows the internal verification/moderation date for each assessment throughout the academic year. The will retain a completed copy and provide a copy to;

- the students in the programme handbook
- the internal verifier/moderator
- each assessor

6. QUALITY ASSURANCES

6.1 Review of implementation of assessment internal verification/moderation and double marking activity will be regularly reviewed by Heads of Department and Academic Registrar to promote continuous quality improvement.

6.2 **Programme coordinators, in liaison with programme teams, are responsible for;**

- 6.2.1 Providing records of internal verification/moderation and double marking activity to facilitate evaluation through qualitative sampling by the Head of Department and/or Academic Registrar.
- 6.2.2 Presenting an overview of the effectiveness of internal verification/moderation and double marking at assessment and examination boards. If appropriate the

presentation will identify progress made with any areas for improvement previously identified either by the external examiner or through internal qualitative sampling activity.

- 6.2.3 Reflecting, and recording in annual programme review, commentary about the effectiveness of the internal verification/moderation and double marking applied to their programme and, where appropriate, propose improvements.
- 6.2.4 If staff cannot meet or release grades within the 20 working day period, then it is down to the responsibility of the marker and/or module leader to report this on SharePoint, under HE Quality. Reasons for not meeting the marking timeframe will be recorded for quality purposes and will be reported to relevant senior members of staff (i.e. Heads of Departments, Director of Faculties & Vice Principals).