

Marking Policy

The VSC policy is consistent with the University of Essex Marking Policy. The policy below has been adapted to fit with the types of coursework administered by the Voice Study Centre. Consultation with the Essex University policy must occur on an annual basis and any adaptations to coursework must be accompanied by changes to the assessment policy in line with approaches taken by Essex University.

Types of Assignment

Summative assessment

Summative assessments are those that contribute to a module mark, award mark, degree classification, or any professional requirements of a course.

Formative assessments

Formative assessments are those for which students may receive a mark, but which does not contribute to any module mark, award mark, degree classification or any professional requirements of a course.

Types of Marking

Single Marking

Single marking is marked by one individual. While this is newly allowed by the University of Wales Trinity St David for all modules bar the final dissertation, it is not permitted by Essex University for modules worth 30 credits or more. Single marking may be used for the formative assignment only.

Second Marking

This is where a second marker marks the work but has access to the first marker's marks and/or comments. Marks must be reconciled.

Double Marking

Two markers mark the work independently without access to each other's marks or comments about the work. Marks must be reconciled.

Reconciliation of marks

Where two members of staff are involved in marking a piece of work, the markers should make every effort to agree a mark, rather than merely averaging the two marks. Departments must keep a full record of both individual and agreed marks for all work that is second or double-marked.

Where the two internal markers are unable to reach an agreement, the department should make every effort to resolve the matter internally, for example by involving a third person to arbitrate or, if necessary, to act as a third marker. Work should only be sent to an External Examiner, who will be asked to arbitrate in exceptional circumstances. The External Examiner must be given access to written comments from internal markers on the piece(s) of work involved. The department should

then make every effort to agree on a mark by reference to comments from the three markers (not purely by averaging).

When a mark is not agreed upon after involving a third marker, departments should seek further guidance and advice from the faculty dean.

Marking Policies

Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy should address the following issues:

- Diversity of assessment within a course
- Coverage of module learning outcomes by assessment methods
- The balance between assessment methods and types
- Approaches to prevent and detect plagiarism in assessment
- Professional Body Requirements, if appropriate

Where modules are assessed by 100% coursework other considerations include:

- Appropriate use of the academic year;
- Approaches to assessment for the discipline at other comparable institutions
- Alignment with comparable courses at Essex University

Anonymous Marking of Coursework

- All summative coursework should be marked anonymously where it is practical to do so.
- Where it is not practical for coursework to be marked anonymously, departments will make students aware, in advance of the assessment task, that this is the case.
- When work is marked anonymously, anonymity should be maintained until the marks for the piece of work have been released to students. In cases where work is subject to second marking, double marking or moderation, anonymity should be maintained until all stages of the marking and moderation process have been completed.
- When work has been marked anonymously and a student subsequently requests that the work should be re-marked the designated second marker(s) should receive an anonymised copy of the student's work, and should not be told the student's identity until the re-marking process has been completed.
- It is not practical to anonymously mark work that has been negotiated or closely supervised. Much of the work carried out at VSC is negotiated and closely supervised and therefore it is necessary for the second assessor to receive an anonymised copy of the student's work. For work which falls into this category and is subject to moderation or second marking, the second assessor may see the first marker's comments on the work, with the exception of any comments which might reveal the student's identity.

Other circumstances when student identity may be revealed:

In the following circumstances, anonymity may be lifted:

Where it is not possible to maintain anonymity and carry out our duty of care or to follow a policy or procedure effectively, including:

- Investigation into a suspected academic offence, and marking of work submitted in response to a penalty relating to an academic offence;

- Where the nature of work submitted for an assignment raises concerns that a student, or someone else, may be at risk of serious harm.

Coursework comprising 30 credits or more

Coursework must be second or double-marked. At Essex University, we will use the second marking system.

Assessment of performance-based coursework (including oral presentation)

Performance-based assessment with a permanent output, capable of being shown to the External Examiner should be subject to the normal policy for essays/assignments, but only where the permanent output relates directly to the assessment criteria. For example, a presentation where output such as a PowerPoint document is submitted would still count as performance-based coursework with non-permanent output, unless a learning outcome being assessed is academic content rather than presentation skill. Work must be either double-marked, team-marked, video/audio recorded or attended by the external examiner based on 100% coverage of the whole cohort.

Requests for a Remark

A student is only entitled to request a remark where their work has been marked by a single marker. All of the work undertaken with the VSC bar the formative assignment is second or double marked and students are not entitled to request a remark. A request for a remark where the work has been second or double-marked may only occur in exceptional circumstances and is at the discretion of the Director of Studies.

The Use of External Markers

All student work is marked by staff working directly for the Voice Study Centre in connection with the teaching and assessment of students. This ensures that the VSC's responsibilities to maintain academic standards are met. Where external markers are used, they will be experienced in the assessment of postgraduate work and formally cleared by Essex University.

The Role of the External Examiner

Unless the External Examiner has been specifically sent work to arbitrate on a dispute between internal markers, the External Examiner's role will be as a moderator. External Examiners should not act as second markers. In moderating student work the Module External Examiner provides an independent overview of the consistency of approaches to assessment. As such, the Module External Examiner's primary concern is with the overall marking standard in the module rather than with marks obtained by individual students. The External Examiner should not alter the marks of any individual student.

External Examiners should be sent the following as a minimum:

- At least 10% of examples across all classifications (including fails).
- If the cohort is under ten, all student work should be seen. Samples should include all of a sample student's work and classifications should be calculated on the module aggregate unless there is a variation to the Rules of Assessment requiring students to pass all assessments. The full range of assessed work (dissertations, examination scripts and so forth) should be sent.

Moderation

Moderation is a process separate from that of marking and provides assurance that assessment criteria have been applied appropriately, reflecting the shared understanding of the markers, and is an approach that enables comparability across academic subjects. A moderator reviews a sample of the marked student's work and liaises with the first marker if they believe that the marks were not at the correct level. A moderator would not change individual students' marks for the work, but the first marker and moderator would agree on whether marks should be reviewed across the particular piece of assessment or module, which may lead to marks being adjusted.

Moderation is not required where modules are second or double-marked unless it forms part of staff development and training.

Releasing marks to students

Provisional marks may be released in accordance with the feedback policy after all the processes have taken place.

Formalised marks may be released after the external examiner has viewed a 10% sample and after the exam board has confirmed the final marks.