PROCEDURES FOR MARKING, MODERATION AND FEEDBACK

Overview

1. The marking and moderation of all module assessment must be conducted in accordance with the general principles of marking and moderation set out below in order that the University may demonstrate that the academic standards have been upheld and that the approved marking criteria have been applied consistently on the assessment for the cohort.

2. Moderation is undertaken by reviewing a sample of assessments following the completion of the marking and marks checking process. Moderation determines if the marking process has been conducted appropriately, in a fair and reliable manner, consistently in accordance with the approved marking criteria and the assessment task. No marks or feedback may be changed as part of the moderation process.

3. Internal moderation is conducted by an internal member of academic staff who is not involved with the marking process. Their role is to review a sample of assessments following the completion of the marking process. They determine if the marking and feedback are appropriate based on the assessment outcomes in the sample and the statistical data provided, not on the marks checking process that has led to the assessment outcomes.

4. External moderation is conducted by the External Examiner who will have access to the same sample of assessments that has been reviewed as part of the internal moderation process. They will also have access to the Internal Moderator's decision and any comments made. Like the Internal Moderator, they determine if the marking and feedback are appropriate based on the assessment outcomes in the sample and the statistical data provided, not on the marks checking process that has led to the assessment outcomes. This ensures that evidence is provided to the External Examiner that marking, feedback and moderation have been completed. Specific duties of the External Examiner are set out in the External Examiner Handbook.

General principles of marking and moderation

5. The following general principles apply to all module assessments which contribute to progression and award.

6. The Faculty/ School marking strategy should ensure a robust marking process is in place that is proportionate to the level of the assessment and to the volume of credit and must take account of the experience of the Marker:

    i. The Module Convenor is responsible for overseeing the marking and marks checking for their module/s. They must ensure that assessments are marked in line with the marking criteria and assessment task and that appropriate feedback is given. They determine when marking is complete, and moderation may begin.
    ii. Marks and feedback may be changed or agreed between markers as part of the marking process but not as part of the moderation process, as moderation is a separate process to assess the robustness of the marking and feedback.
    iii. To support transparency, the marking and feedback of all contributory module assessments must clearly indicate the rationale for the proposed mark. The feedback will be made available routinely, along with the proposed mark, as part of the moderation process.
    iv. Markers should mark using a numerical scale of 0-100. Decimal places should not be used when marking *single* assessments.

v. Markers must *not* accept written contributory module assessments directly from students.
vi. Marking should be conducted anonymously in line with the section on Anonymity, confidentiality and personal interest below.
vii. A marker should not mark any assessed work where they have any personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student. The Marker should inform their Faculty Assessment Lead as soon as any such situation arises so that alternative arrangements for marking can be made.
viii. It is part of a marker's responsibilities to be alert when marking for signs of academic misconduct (such as collusion or plagiarism) and, if necessary, to instigate the procedures set out in the **Academic Misconduct Policy**.
ix. Where students are required to submit hard copies of their assessed work, they must be asked to submit two copies, so that a copy can be retained by the University and a sample generated for moderation purposes.

7. The moderation process ensures that proposed marks and feedback are internally moderated, based on a sample of assessments and statistical data, following the completion of the marking process. The Chair of the Board of Study is responsible for appointing a Moderator to each module who has not been involved in the marking process. A guide for assessments submitted in hard copy is provided at **Appendix 1.** A flowchart setting out the University moderation process is provided at **Appendix 2**.

Internal moderation

8. The sample for internal moderation must include:

- Assessments from all marking bands and must include between 7 and 25 assessments (10% of assessments on a large cohort of 70 students or above, up to a maximum of 25 assessments, or a minimum of 7 assessments (whichever is the higher)) and all fails.
- For assessments submitted electronically, the sample will be automatically generated. For all other assessments the Chair of the Board of Study (or nominee) will select the sample. Any examination answer paper deemed to be illegible should also be included in the sample.

This sample must be reviewed by an internal moderator to ensure that the marking and feedback are appropriate, and that the marking is conducted consistently in accordance with the approved marking criteria and the assessment task;

- All module assessments (including resits) which contribute to progression and/or award must be moderated except for the following assessments which should be excluded from the moderation sample:
  - assessments where internal marker/s cannot agree on the mark, as a mark must be allocated for all assessments as part of the marking process prior to moderation. This means that marks must not be agreed between an internal Marker and the Moderator.
- The following <u>may</u> be excluded from the moderation process:
  Assessment components weighted at 30% or below of the module assessment. Where all assessment components are weighted at 30% or below, up to 30% of the module assessment may be excluded from moderation. Exceptionally, for modules that only include e-submission assessments, a single assessment component will be automatically selected for moderation, in order to support e-submission.
  - Assessment modes which include a substantial individual or practical element (postgraduate and undergraduate dissertations/final stage projects, presentations (individual/group), teaching practice modes). The Chair of the Board of Study must agree with the External Examiner an appropriate process for the external moderation of assessments with an individual element of assessment.

NOTE: Where a PGT or UG dissertation/project is not internally moderated, there is an expectation that double marking will take place prior to external examiner moderation.

- stage 0/1 assessments at Levels 3 and 4.

9. Where the Moderator confirms that the marking and feedback on the sample is robust and appropriate, the marks and feedback can be published as provisional to the cohort. This ensures that normally only moderated marks are published and that marks for the cohort on any given assessment are published at the same time.

10. Where the Moderator does not confirm that the sample marks and feedback are robust, a different sample must be reviewed by a second moderator. The Faculty/ School may undertake a remark to address the issues raised by the Moderator in advance of a second sample being reviewed by the second moderator. Where the second moderator does not approve the sample, the marks for the cohort are discounted and the marking process must be restarted with a different marker not involved in the first marking process. Exceptionally, a remark may be limited to a specific area of concern, for example, the first class band or a particular examination question provided this is applied to the whole cohort. In all cases the students should be advised of a second date when marks are expected to be published or that the unmoderated marks have been published. (All marks published are provisional and subject to ratification by the exam board).

11. Where the sample is rejected due to an administrative error (such as a mistake in the adding up of marks from different sections of an exam paper), the entire cohort must be checked by the Module Convenor to confirm that no other administrative errors have been made.

12. Faculty/Schools may request exemption from the University's moderation process for particular assessments. Any proposals must be supported by the Faculty Assessment Lead and the FEC/ SEC and referred to UEC along with a rationale indicating how the assessments would be quality assured.

External Moderation

13. The same sample and statistical data must be made available to the External Examiner for external moderation. This ensures that the sample reviewed by the External Examiner will demonstrate evidence of marking, feedback and moderation.

14. The External Examiner may request a second sample for scrutiny or may refer the assessment back for a partial/full remark for the whole cohort.

15. No assessment submitted late (within 24 hours or 7 days) requires to be moderated provided that it is marked by the same Marker.

Provision of marks and feedback on module assessments

16. The following applies to all assessments on all modules contributing to progression and/or an award:

    i. a mark must be given unless the assessment is graded pass/fail. The mark should be communicated to the student via Sussex Direct, along with the following proviso under which marks are published:

        - that all marks are provisional and subject to external moderation until assured by the relevant Module Assessment Board (MAB).

- MAB and Progression and Award Board PAB decisions are not open to appeal until after ratification and publication of results by the relevant PAB.

ii. Written feedback should be given on all contributory module assessments including examination papers, presentations and oral examinations. Feedback may be provided via Sussex Direct or via a feedback sheet and/or annotated script, including examination scripts, as agreed by the Faculty/ School.

iii. Markers are asked to ensure that feedback is specifically related, at least in part, to marking criteria (either the approved Faculty/ School generic subject specific marking criteria or the marking criteria for that assessment mode), and that the comments are appropriate as 'feed forward' for future assessments.

iv. The University requires that marks and feedback for module assessments that contribute to progression and/or an award will normally be published to students as follows:

- for assessments that occur within a teaching period: normally within 3 weeks (excluding University closure days, so 15 working days) from the published assessment date. Where this would lead to marks and feedback being published within an assessment period, these should be published at the start of the week following the assessment period.
- for assessments that occur within the A1 assessment period: by the start of week 3 of Semester 2.
- for assessments that occur within the A2 assessment period or resit assessment period: after the relevant Progression and Award Board has met.

Marks and feedback publication dates must allow for feedback to be given in a timely manner to be considered for the next assessment (feed-forward). Marks and feedback should not be published before the end of the late submission period, to ensure that students submitting late do not benefit from feedback given to the cohort. No timescale guarantees can be given for assessments submitted after the published deadline, within the permitted lateness period.

v. Where the publication of marks and feedback will be after the expected date of publication (see para 16iv), students registered on the module should be informed before the expected date of publication, and no later than 24 hours after it. It is the responsibility of the Module Convenor to communicate this to students, providing an explanation for the delay and a date by which marks, and feedback will be published, and including the Departmental/School/Faculty Office. Where the Module Convenor is unavailable, this responsibility will fall to the Head of Department (Chair of the Board of Study) in conjunction with the Faculty Assessment Lead, where appropriate.

vi. Where a student identifies that the publication of marks and feedback has not occurred by the expected publication date, and they have not received a communication on this, they will be advised to contact both the Module Convenor and the Departmental/School/Faculty Office. Students in the module cohort should then receive an explanation for the delay and a date by which marks, and feedback will be published as soon as possible.

vii. A report should be provided to Faculty/School Education Committees by Departmental/School/Faculty Offices recording modules that include as assessment for which an expected publication date for marks and feedback has not been met and, for these modules, whether students received a communication to this effect.

viii. The overall proportion of assessments in each Faculty/School for which marks and feedback have been published by the expected publication date will be reported by

each Faculty/School to their Faculty Education Committee and published to students (biannually: for S1/A1 and S2/A2/A3).

Collection of examination scripts from the Exams and Assessment Office

17. Enclosed with each batch of examination scripts for on campus exams is a batch marks sheet recording the number of scripts to be marked and a list of any students who are prohibited by the rubric from answering certain questions, based on information provided by the Chair of the Board of Study.

18. In cases involving more than two markers in the marking process, the Module Convenor is responsible for collecting and distributing the scripts, together with a copy of the batch marks sheet, to appropriate markers.

The marking of particular cases

Incomplete work

19. Where an assessment has been unanswered (such as where there is a requirement for a specific number of questions but some are wholly unanswered) or has been answered but is illegible, a zero on the marks sheet should be entered for each question not attempted and for each question that is illegible. The mark for the whole paper is arrived at by including these zero marks in the calculation. The legibility of an assessment is not based on the academic judgement of a single member of staff and is open to appeal. Any assessment considered to be illegible should be included in the moderation sample. In cases where a mark of zero is applied the Faculty/School must arrange for the students' other assessments to be checked to determine if there were any concerns regarding legibility. This will enable Faculties/Schools to refer students to Disability Advice where appropriate. Where the student has dyslexia or a disability impacting on their handwriting, the Disability Advice team can arrange for a PC or in cases of late diagnosis for the assessment to be typed at the expense of the University.

20. Where an assessment has been partly answered - the answer being unfinished - Markers must mark the incomplete answer as it stands and should not try to estimate what mark might have been merited had it been answered in full. In arriving at the mark for the paper as a whole, the mark for an incomplete answer should be treated in exactly the same way as a mark for a completed answer.

21. Where an assessment is assessed by several assessment components and one or more assessment component(s) has not been submitted, the assessment will be treated as incomplete work. A mark must be given for the assessment component(s) which have been completed.

Failure to observe limits on word length

22. The maximum word length for each assessment is publicised to students. The limits as stated include quotations in the text, but do not include the bibliography, footnotes/endnotes, appendices, abstracts, maps, illustrations, transcriptions of linguistic data, or tabulations of numerical or linguistic data and their captions. Any excess in length should not confer an advantage over other students who have adhered to the guidance. Students are requested to state the word count on submission. Where a student has marginally (within 10%) exceeded the word length the Marker should penalise the work where the student would gain an unfair advantage by exceeding the word limit. In excessive cases (>10%) the Marker need only consider work up to the designated word count and discount any excessive word length beyond that to ensure equity across the cohort. Where an assessment is submitted and falls significantly short (>10%) of the word length, the Marker must consider in assigning a mark, if the argument has been

sufficiently developed and is sufficiently supported and not assign the full marks allocation where this is not the case.

Overlapping material

23. Unless specifically allowed in module or course documentation, the use of the same material in more than one assessment exercise will be subject to penalties. If markers detect substantial overlap or repetition in the subject matter of a student's assessments within a single module or across other modules they must adjust the mark of the latter assessment so that the student does not receive credit for using the same material twice. Such cases are not processed as academic misconduct.

24. Examination questions should take into account the full range of the subject matter of the module and test specific module learning outcomes. Where examination questions touch on previously assessed material, the examination question should be constructed in such a way that a sufficiently different line of argument or mode of analysis is necessitated by way of answer. This does not apply to resit examination papers. It should be noted that in unseen examinations students are free to choose the questions to be answered within the limits set by the rubric. Any overlap between unseen examination papers and other forms of assessment which is permitted by the unseen examination rubric cannot be penalised by the Markers.

Marking late submissions

25. Work submitted late must be recorded as such but should be marked as normal by the same Marker who marked the work submitted by the deadline. Penalties for late submission are set out in the Late Submission Penalty Framework (para 44 of the UG Progression and Award Regulations, and clause 36 of the PGT Progression and Award Regulations). Late submissions do not need to be moderated or considered separately to the cohort by the MAB.

Suspected academic misconduct including the use of AI

26. If during the course of marking, academic misconduct is suspected, the Academic Misconduct Regulations should be followed. See appendix 4 for approaches to marking where the illicit use of AI is suspected.

Assessments by candidates with a literacy notification

Process for adding literacy notifications to assessments for marking

27. Students assessed by the Disability Advice (DA) team as being eligible for a literacy notification will be supplied with a flag indicating this, so that consideration can be taken in the marking process. It is the student's responsibility to attach the flag to their submitted work, including online exams. Where flags are left off a submission, for whatever reason, the Marker will not be able to give particular consideration to errors symptomatic of specific learning differences or other disabilities. For exams held on campus, the Student Administration Office will attach flags to the examination scripts of such students before they are distributed to internal examiners. Work submitted prior to disability assessment by DA will not be remarked.

Protocols for marking assessments with literacy notifications

28. When marking assessments with literacy notifications, the Marker is asked to try to separate marking of transcription errors and marking of content. However, while sympathetic treatment of assessed work submitted by students with a specific learning difference, or other disability, implies that less weight is placed on errors of spelling and

grammar, the communication itself must be effective. If academic standards are to be safeguarded, sympathetic treatment cannot extend to written expression so poor that coherence and intelligibility are at issue. In effect, the Marker ought not to penalise errors that a good copy editor could put right.

29. The written work of students with specific learning differences, or other disabilities, may be characterised by one, or in some cases, several, of the following:

- omitted words or punctuation;
- excessive or misplaced punctuation;
- repeated information or phrases – this would not be detected by a spellchecker or by a student with specific learning differences proofreading their own draft;
- unsophisticated language structures – in order to avoid grammatical errors, students with specific learning differences may adopt simplified language structures, which do not necessarily denote unsophisticated thinking;
- simplified vocabulary – in order to avoid spelling errors, students with specific learning differences may adopt a simplified vocabulary when writing;
- difficulties with sequencing or word-finding may produce a stilted style of writing

30. Although assessed work, other than examination scripts for exams held on campus, is likely to be word-processed and spell-checked, markers should be aware of the limitations of a spellchecker. Some of the problems likely to remain in the work of students with specific learning differences, or other disabilities, after spell-checking include:

- homophone substitutions (such as there/their, effect/affect,);
- phonetic equivalents (such as frenetic for phonetic, homerfone for homophone);
- incorrect word substitution (distance for disturbance);
- American spelling (such as colorful, fueling).

Assessment produced by students using a scribe

31. Students whose circumstances cause them difficulty writing may be allowed the use of a scribe to transcribe their examination answers (for exams held on campus), provided that a scribe has been approved by Disability Advice. In such cases the student must have the work flagged with a sticker which indicates that the work has been produced with the help of a scribe. Although the scribe is only permitted to write exactly what the student has dictated to them, and the student is responsible for checking the work produced, it is still possible that, in the pressure of the examination-with-scribe situation, minor spelling and grammatical errors may go unnoticed. Markers are asked to ignore minor spelling and grammatical errors on assessments flagged as being produced with the help of a scribe. In all cases the scribe will not be expected to bring specialist knowledge to the work.

Anonymity, Confidentiality and Personal Interest

32. The marking of assessed work should be conducted anonymously as far as reasonably practicable (for some types of assessments, anonymity is impossible, such as presentations). Names must be anonymised in the marking of submissions and examinations that contribute to progression and award. The principle of anonymity extends to marks confirmation by Module Assessment Boards (MABs) and to the consideration of marks arrays and assessment outcomes by Progression and Award Boards (PABs).

33. In cases, where adhering to the policy of anonymity causes significant issues of concern, for example, where the conferral of the award embeds a professional qualification that requires a fuller discussion of individual performance, an exemption from the policy may be sought. A request, with supporting rationale, should be submitted to the University

Education Committee via the Faculty/School Education Committee. Exemptions are included in **Appendix 3**.

34. The following should be observed in relation to personal interest and/or knowledge of a student:

i. If there is any personal interest, involvement or relationship between a marker and a student, the marker should not mark the student's work and should declare the interest to the Associate Dean, Education and Students, or their designated nominee (see also Personal Relationships Policy).
ii. Members of examination boards must likewise declare any such personal connection with a student being assessed either in advance to the Chair of the examination board or at the meeting before the student is considered. The marker must leave the meeting while the student in question is being considered;
iii. Advocacy is not permitted on behalf of students about whom a marker has special knowledge (such as Academic Personal Tutor). Board members' knowledge of exceptional circumstances affecting students should not be discussed regardless of whether a student has made an exceptional circumstances claim within the published deadline.

35. The following are general principles on confidentiality:

- With the exception of seen examinations, the content of examination papers must not be revealed in advance to students.
  - the names of internal markers of assessed work are, formally, confidential until feedback is provided.
  - Access to students' marks before and after examination board meetings should be restricted to members of staff who require access in their work capacity.
  - Academic and professional services members of staff are not permitted to inform students of their recommended classification/award outcome or module results before these are published (this does not preclude providing feedback to students, based on the marking criteria for the assessed work, indicating areas of strength and weakness and does not preclude a discussion with a student who has failed to achieve an award prior to publication of results).
  - The discussions of Module Assessment Boards (MABs) and Progression and Award Boards (PABs) are strictly confidential (this does not preclude publishing decisions or providing students with a rationale following a MAB/PAB decision)

Other sources of guidance

36. Check with Faculty/School Offices for local guidance on the operation of the marking and moderation.

37. See **Appendix 4** for other sources of advice and guidance relevant to the marking, moderation and feedback processes.

Review / Contacts / References	
Title:	Procedures for Marking, Moderation & Feedback
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Document owner:	Division for the Student Experience

Lead contact:	Academic Regulations Manager

Appendix 1

University process for the moderation of marks

This process guide on the moderation of marks is designed for marking and moderating assessments which are submitted in hard copy. Please also refer to the flow chart at the end of this appendix.

Step 1: Marking process

- The marker records the mark on the individual cover sheet and the batch marks sheet.
- The marker records the feedback, either directly on Sussex Direct or on the individual cover sheet. Faculties/ schools may allocate a member of staff to enter the feedback on Sussex Direct from the individual cover sheet. Marks and feedback are recorded in line with the principle of anonymous marking
- The marker completes A batch marks sheet for the batch recording a mark for every assessment in the batch, and attaches to the front of the batch (this stays with the batch close brackets). A number of internal markets may be involved in the marking for a large cohort, each with a batch marks sheet for the batch of assessments that they are marking.

Step 2: Selecting the sample for moderation

- The sample should be selected by the chair of the board of study (or nominee).
- The chair of the Board of study (or their nominee) Identifies the sample on the batch mark sheet. The marker passes the sample of assessments and batch marksheet to the moderator are to conduct the moderation process.
- The relevant professional services colleague sets the time frame for the sample to be returned to the marker by the moderator (this is necessary to meet the deadline for the return of Marks and feedback to students and to meet any end of year deadlines in relation to examination boards).

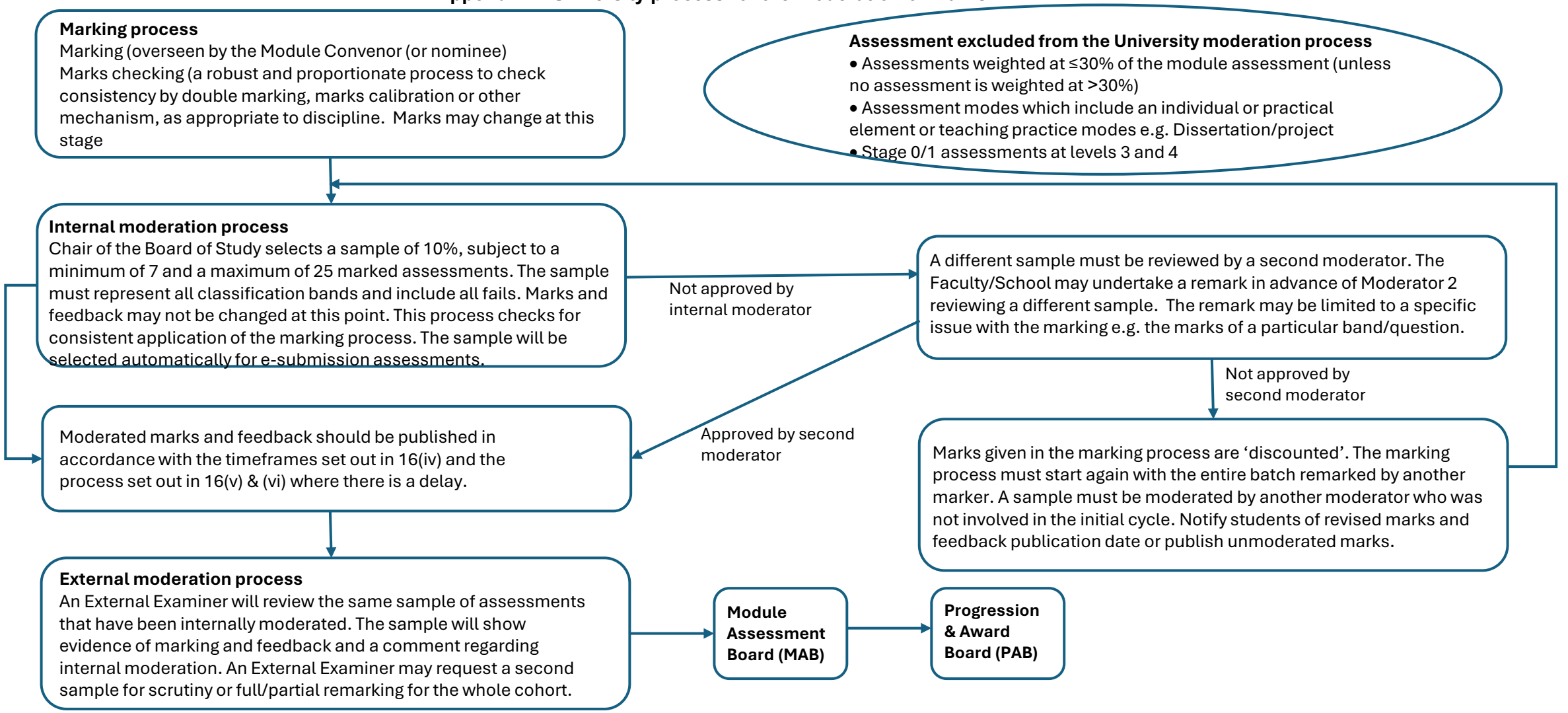
Step 3: conducting and recording the moderation process

- The moderator will need to review the feedback via Sussex Direct or the individual cover sheet attached to each assessment in the sample, as appropriate.
- The moderator records their comments on the batch mark sheet for the sample of assessments to confirm whether in their academic judgement the marking and feedback is robust and appropriate.
- Where the moderator confirms the sample, the assessments for the cohort and the batch marks sheet are taken to the relevant department/school/faculty office to complete and/or check the marks entry for all assessments in the cohort.
- The Marks and feedback can then be published
- Where the moderator are does not confirm the sample, a different sample must be moderated by a second moderator. The first moderator records the outcome on the batch marks sheet.
- Where the second moderator confirms the sample, the marks and feedback are published as above.
- Where the second moderator does not confirm the sample, the marking process must be restarted.

Step 4: publication of moderated Marks and feedback to students

- The chair of the board of study (or their nominee) ensures that the moderated Marks and feedback have been input correctly to the central recording system and that is process is completed within the appropriate deadlines.
- Marks and feedback are published by faculties/schools with an annotated copy of the assessment being made available to the student.

Appendix 2: University process for the moderation of marks



Appendix 3: Courses permitted to use named candidate arrays

MAH: English:

Q3123 Radical Theory portfolios only

ESW:

Social Work and ITE courses

Appendix 4

Other sources of advice and guidance on marking and giving feedback

How to view and mark submissions	https://staff.sussex.ac.uk/teaching/enhancement/support/assessment-marking-feedback/submissions
Rubrics and grading forms	https://staff.sussex.ac.uk/teaching/enhancement/support/assessment-marking-feedback/rubrics-grading-forms
Understanding the Turnitin similarity score	https://staff.sussex.ac.uk/teaching/enhancement/support/assessment-marking-feedback/turnitin-similarity-score
Further technical advice on the moderation process	https://staff.sussex.ac.uk/teaching/enhancement/support/assessment-marking-feedback/moderation
Releasing grades and feedback	https://staff.sussex.ac.uk/teaching/enhancement/support/assessment-marking-feedback/release
Understanding how feedback appears to students	https://staff.sussex.ac.uk/teaching/enhancement/support/assessment-marking-feedback/feedback-students
Directing students to their feedback	https://staff.sussex.ac.uk/teaching/enhancement/support/assessment-marking-feedback/feedback-students-view
Use of AI in assessment including what to do if the illicit use of AI is suspected	https://staff.sussex.ac.uk/teaching/enhancement/support/artificial-intelligence/academic-integrity