



Union School of Theology Moderation Policy and Procedures

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2. INTRODUCTION

In assessing students' work, Union School of Theology (UST) is committed to continue the good educational practice of moderation in order to ensure that the assessment criteria have been applied correctly and consistently and that there is a parity of assessment across the cohort. Assessment methods, procedures, criteria and the grading scheme can all be found in the relevant Student Handbook, which is posted in the student information section of the School VLE the 'Cloud.'

3. POLICY FRAMEWORK

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following regulations, policies and procedures. This list is not exhaustive:

- [Union School of Theology Programme Handbooks](#)
- [Union School of Theology Learning Support Policy](#)
- [Union School of Theology Equal Opportunities Policy](#)
- [Union School of Theology Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Union School of Theology Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Union School of Theology Data Protection Policy](#)
- [QAA 'UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Part A: 'Setting and maintaining academic standards'](#)
- [Open University Handbook for Validated Awards](#)

4. SECOND MARKING

4.1 All failed Level 4, 5, 6 and 7 summative assessments, all level 6 BA, and all MTh summative assessments, are second marked by another UST lecturer. All summative assessments from BA, GDip and MTh modules taught by a lecturer in their first year of teaching at UST are also second marked internally. All other summative assessments are subject to an internal moderation process.

4.2 If there is a difference in marks on scripts that have been second marked, the first marker and second marker should agree on a mark. If any differential between the internal markers involves a change in the classification banding of a student, then no matter the size of the differential, the two markers concerned must discuss the situation to seek a mutually agreed mark. If they are unable to do so, a third independent marker who holds a senior academic position in the School should be asked to re-mark the work, review the first and second markers mark sheets, and award a final mark.

5. INTERNAL MODERATION

5.1 By the term 'moderation', we mean carrying out a competent, impartial and careful scrutiny of selected scripts by a member of the School academic staff other than the person originally designated to mark the work. Moderation will be carried out using the same assessment criteria as the first markers.

5.2 In internally moderating the work, we seek to ensure that the students are assessed with accuracy, consistency, transparency and fairness.

5.3 The Moderator's work involves but is not limited to:

- 5.3.1 Acting in an advisory capacity, providing feedback to first markers.
- 5.3.2 Monitoring assessed work and the way it has been undertaken.

- 5.3.3 Ensuring the validity of internal assessments, checking that they conform to the School and Open University requirements.
 - 5.3.4 Suggesting amendments to the outcome of grades or marks awarded, as necessary, with rationale.
 - 5.3.5 Cascading information to relevant parties.
 - 5.3.6 Ensuring records are accurate and authentic.
- 5.4 All other work submitted as part of a summative assessment, apart from that in sections 4.1 in 4.2 above, is subject to an internal moderation process. Generally a moderator considers a representative sample of scripts from the lower, middle, and upper end of the marking scale. Borderline cases are also scrutinised carefully by the moderator.
- 5.5 All moderators complete a Moderation Record Sheet for the samples of works they have moderated, record any comments made, in order to encourage best practice.
- 5.6 If the moderator is of the opinion that the marks for the whole batch of papers should be adjusted, both the marker and the moderator, in consultation with the Programme Leader, will assess the appropriateness of this and the way that the marks for the whole set of papers for the cohort should be amended.
- 5.7 If necessary, referral may be made to the Programme Leader, who may also consult the External Examiners, who advise on the moderation process, but do not mark students' work themselves.
- 5.8 No mark except the mark agreed after the moderation process should be put on the material which will be returned to the candidate.

6. EXTERNAL MODERATION

- 6.1 The External Examiners are responsible to the Academic Board for ensuring that marking and moderation is adequately conducted for the work they receive.
- 6.2 External examiners' work involves but is not limited to:
- 6.2.1 Acting in an advisory capacity, providing feedback to first and second markers.
 - 6.2.2 Monitoring assessed work and the way it has been undertaken.

- 6.2.3 Ensuring the validity of internal assessments, checking that they conform to the School and Open University requirements.
- 6.2.4 Sampling assessed work in accordance with the School requirements to ensure the quality of feedback and consistency of grading decisions.
- 6.2.5 Recommending an adjustment for the whole cohort's results when they feel this is justified.
- 6.2.6 Communicating information to all relevant parties.
- 6.2.7 Confirming records are accurate and authentic.
- 6.2.8 Ensuring that quality assurance and associated procedures are in place.
- 6.2.9 Facilitating the process of successfully meeting external moderation requirements.
- 6.2.10 Approving assessment and examination questions prior to use.

6.3 The School, through the remit of the External Examiners, confirms that it meets the quality of process through:

- 6.3.1 The fitness for purpose of the assessment and moderation processes.
- 6.3.2 The quality and consistency of assessment decisions and practices.
- 6.3.3 An audit of records.
- 6.3.4 Agreed actions.
- 6.3.5 Assessment decisions, including grades or marks awarded by the internal assessors.

6.7 The Academic Administrative Assistant is responsible for checking that all papers have been internally moderated before sending off a sample to the external moderator, who is an External Examiner.

The sample to be sent to the External Examiner shall be negotiated between the Programme Leader and the External Examiner. There is no maximum or minimum size. The External Examiner should see examples of assessments across all levels. The sampling pattern is usually, all work in the first-class category, all fails, all borderline cases, and 25% of all other assessments. In the event of a small cohort (of under 20 students) the External Examiner will see all assessments.

6.8 The External Examiners are not normally allowed to change marks. However, they can recommend in the feedback to the Programme Leader an adjustment to the marks for the whole cohort when they feel this is justified. This would be discussed and approved at the Examination Board.

7. OTHER REGULATIONS

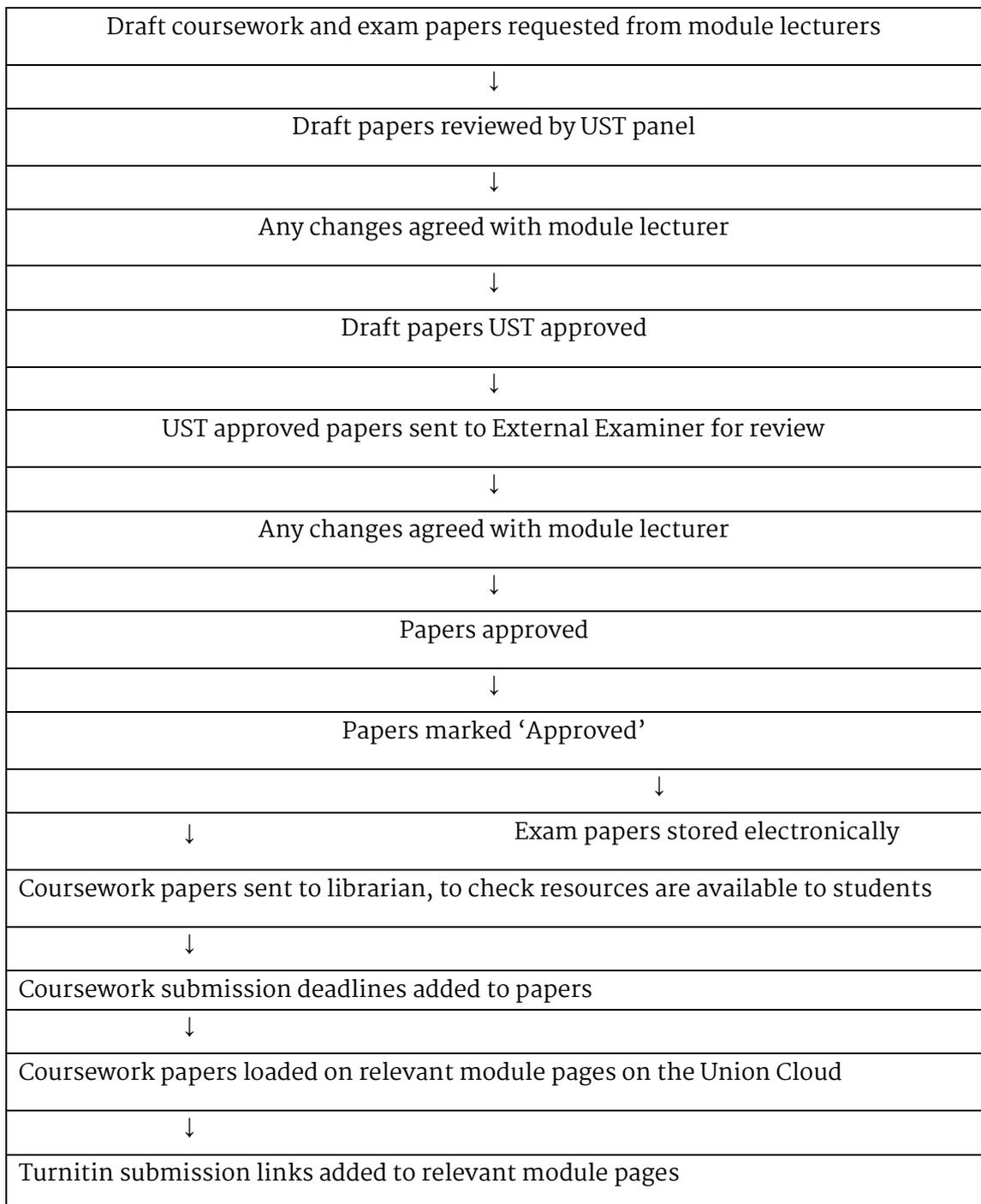
7.1 Moderation should be on academic merit alone. The School makes every effort, in accordance with its [‘Equal Opportunities Policy’](#) to ensure that students are treated solely on the basis of their merit, abilities and potential and do not suffer from unlawful discrimination. We believe that diversity is a positive contribution to the learning experience at Union School of Theology.

7.2 Extenuating circumstances affecting the assessment, should be dealt with according to the School’s [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).

7.3 Where a second marker becomes aware of academic misconduct, the matter should be dealt with according to the School’s [Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

7.4 All student academic records are kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. See the Union School of Theology [Data Protection Policy](#) for details. In line with the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation, students are entitled to a copy of all their personal data held by us. All requests should be made to the Academic Registrar.

8. Assessment Approval and Marking Process



Marking Coursework

Students submit coursework via Turnitin wherever possible
↓
On submission deadline date, submitted coursework is printed and passed to first marker for marking
↓
Coursework is passed to second marker for moderation
[Dissertations – two copies are printed and passed to first and second markers at the same time. The work is marked by both independently.]
↓
Markers liaise to reach agreed marks where necessary
↓
Provisional agreed marks are recorded
↓
Student feedback and marked coursework are scanned and emailed to student with provisional mark

Marking Examinations

At the end of each examination exam scripts are passed to first marker for marking
↓
Where necessary exam scripts are passed to second marker for moderation
↓
Markers liaise to reach agreed marks where necessary
↓
Provisional agreed marks are recorded

Marking All Assessments

Representative samples of marked assessments for each module are sent to the external examiner for moderation.
↓
Draft module results documents are checked by module lecturers
↓
All module marks are confirmed or amended at the Examination Board.
↓
Marks are recorded on UST database
↓
Marks are Ratified by the Open University
↓
Students are notified of confirmed results by letter only after marks have been ratified by the Open University

ENSURING THE INTEGRITY OF ASSESSMENT PROCESSES ACROSS TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

- 8.1 Students register onto the programme individually, and sign a student contract with UST which includes a commitment to refrain from academic malpractice. [UST [Student Contract](#), Section 3.3]
- 8.2 Students must make a declaration that they have understood the definition of academic misconduct and that all work which they will submit for assessment will be their own unaided work, observing the established expectations in submitting work for assessment. [UST [Academic Malpractice Policy](#), Section 6.5)
- 8.3 A range of assessment means are used across the Graduate Diploma programme (which is not delivered on campus), including essays, exams (at UST or approved centre of learning with ID proof needed), and oral presentation – in the Preaching and Pastoral Theology module). Two compulsory modules are assessed in a combination of exam and essay formats. All these measures are designed to support the integrity of the assessment process.
- 8.4 Analysis of trends in student performance across assessments is made (and reported in the Student Progress reports to Programme Committees).
- 8.5 External examiners have the right to request oral examination of any candidate
- 8.6 A report for Programme Committee progress review will be provided by the IT Resources Manager of UST as to VPN logins from designated computer, and this will be made available for the Board of Examiners.

8.7 Feedback will be taken from lecturers and Lead Mentors in Learning Communities as to the level of engagement with the course materials by students.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES, POLICY APPROVAL AND REVIEW

9.1 The Provost and Programme Leaders have overall responsibility for the moderation policy, including its approval and annual review.

9.2 The Programme Leaders have responsibility for overseeing the monitoring of moderation and ensuring that decision making complies with Open University regulations.

10. POLICY COMMUNICATION

10.1 This document can be found on the School VLE [the Union Cloud] and on the School website: www.ust.ac.uk.

10.2 Every effort will be made to respond to any request to provide this policy in a different format.

10.3 This policy will be included in staff and student induction.