

Subject	Issue	Response
History 1B (Making of Europe)	<p>Q. 2.8 The module convenor and his colleagues worked incredibly hard to iron out any issues related to the application of the marking criteria. This applied mainly to examiners at the Crichton Campus, whose marks differed significantly both from those on the main campus and in relation to the marking criteria.</p> <p>The examiners at the Crichton campus need to apply the criteria more carefully, thus reducing the need for a full second mark of papers. More specific feedback should be provided to students at Crichton on coursework essays that is designed to enable students to learn from constructive criticism of their work in order to improve their skills and overall performance.</p>	<p>Note that 2011-12 was the last year History 1B was offered. It has been withdrawn from the Dumfries curriculum. The GTA was [REDACTED] who was responsible for first marking of all summative coursework and leading seminars.</p> <p>Q.2.8 This mark sheet was adapted from one used in the Dept of History and thus followed the same protocol and standards. Comments from the GTA were quite fulsome and were potentially helpful to the student, second marker and external examiner. However, it should be pointed out, that as moderator of the 1B coursework, including the Essay and the Final Exam, I felt that the GTA had marked several of the assignments too high and many of the grades were pulled down at my suggestion. At a meeting with the GTA ahead of submitting the coursework to the Main Campus convener, I alerted her that the grades should be modified, in accordance with the grade related criteria, and she agreed. The Main Campus convener, [REDACTED] also agreed that the GTA's marking was on the high side. Her decision to reduce a few of the grades further was done in telephone consultation with me. [REDACTED] also felt it would be beneficial for me to see the scripts that had been further modified by her and so these were sent down to me. This was useful and helped me to clearly indicate to the GTA a couple of examples of work that had been downgraded.</p> <p>8.2 The examiners at the Crichton Campus do apply the grade-related criteria carefully and appropriately. However, it must be admitted that the GTAs marking for History 1B was, in this instance, too high. This was explained to her and she was made aware of the decision to lower some of her grades. As this was a first-year course, there is a fine balance between appropriately grading students in accordance with the grade-related criteria while also encouraging the students.</p>
BEd (Primary Education) - Religious Education	<p>Q. 2.8 In general I was impressed by consistent, diligent, fair marking. However, there was a significant difference in the way in which the marking criteria were applied by one marker for [REDACTED]. Question 3 was marked appreciably lower than the other three questions. Two of the sample papers given to me were seriously undermarked (One D3 was an A4/A3;</p>	<p>The member of staff referred to met with her RKT leader at the beginning of the first semester to discuss this particular issue. This meeting has been formally recorded. In addition, all marking staff have been made aware of the external's concern regarding consistency of grading and feedback and the importance of all staff attending the moderation meeting has been emphasised further.</p>

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	<p>one C3 was a B3). I noted that in question three 23 failed and 68 got a D. Compare this to question 1 where 14 failed and 17 got a D: and question 2 where 1 failed and 11 got a D. I recommended moving up all of the grades on question 3 by one full grade (ie. a B3 became an A3).</p>	
<p>Childhood Practice (BA in)</p>	<p>Q. 8.2 Ensure consistency in feedback and grade awarded at all times. For example on a few occasions students might have received very good for both criteria but then were awarded C1; • I have a few concerns about the range of marks awarded during the cross moderation exercise e.g. for one assignment there was a difference in marks from B3 to E1. Although I wish to applaud all those involved for engaging in this very rigorous process, I wonder how tutors are being monitored when they then mark pieces of work individually;</p>	<p>This occurred on one course when an external marker was used. The Programme Leader had sent out scripts to the course tutor and the external marker (who had not taught on the course) for moderation. The course tutor met with the external marker to discuss the content of the course before undertaking the marking of the scripts for moderation. The external marker gave one script a B3 however the course tutor had observed that there were fundamental flaws with the script and these were subsequently discussed. This discussion allowed the course tutor and the external marker the opportunity to determine the marking of the rest of the scripts as part of the Quality Assurance process. The external marker was encouraged to bring to the attention of the course tutor/Programme Leader any scripts which there was any doubt about. (This was discussed at the examboard.).</p>
<p>Earth Sciences</p>	<p>Q. 5.4 .The lack of consistency in moderation was identified as being a significant issue that needs attention, and this is true at both the individual question and individual module level. Moderation was exceedingly cursory in some cases (e.g. 'agreed' on every script) with a lack of transparency for the external examiner, and there was inconsistency from module to module. There is also a lack of consistency on marking practice across the School, with at least some geography module leaders not providing model answers whereas the geology modules were consistent. How well are assessment processes harmonised across the School, and is there a risk in students being treated in different ways across the same School? Overall, a tendency towards black box mark generation with no transparency about how agreement is reached regarding individual marks. Also, different schemes and methods apply to</p>	<p>We have undertaken a review of our grading of courses and have adopted a revised more systematic and transparent approach to marking and moderation. This includes: Revising the marking sheets and producing moderation sheets to detail how grades are determined and agreed; Adopting a more consistent approach to which items of assessment require moderation or independent double marking etc;</p> <p>Documenting procedures for dealing with any disagreements between markers; Informing students of the grading procedures used for all items of assessment.</p>

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	different modules – lack of consistency	
Geoinformation Technology & Cartography (MSc) /Geospatial & Mapping Sciences (MSc)	Q. 5.4 On 5.1 I have a specific issue with the procedures used to mark students' projects. I received two sample projects, as did my co-examiner, and I also received mark sheets for the full cohort. The latter were hand written, often difficult to decipher. In several cases the second marker appeared to have given a divergent mark (often quite seriously so - A2 v C1) but no information was forthcoming on the process by which a final mark was agreed. I appreciate that there may be initial divergences of opinion, particularly with new staff, but the procedure needs to be fully documented and explained. I repeat almost exactly the same recommendation that I made last year: there should be a formal mark sheet that incorporates the initial blind marks and comments of the two examiners, and a section giving the reasons for a final agreed mark where differences have occurred. Staff should not be submitting hand-written reports.	<p>There are clear guidelines for resolving situations where markers do not agree. Where this is significant, the 2 markers meet and discuss the project report and the reasons for the grade awarded. If a grade cannot be agreed the project would be referred to a third marker.</p> <p>In the particular case highlighted with an unusually large difference rarely encountered, the first marker (project supervisor) probably had unrealistic expectations of the outcome and in discussion agreed that the first part of the project was excellent; the second marker, new to the University, accepted that the second part, while well written, did not adequately deal with the problem when this was explained by the supervisor. Both were happy to agree the compromise mark, but we accept that in future such discussions and rationale for the outcome should be recorded.</p>
MBChB SSCs	Q. 5.4 My concern is that the standards between modules appear not to be maintained, ie the standards to get an A in one module is not the same as in another module	<p>Standardisation of assessment for SSCs is challenging and a well recognised problems in all Medical Schools (information from SSC GMC meetings, being External Examiner in 4 Schools).</p> <p>It is generally accepted that reliability of SSC assessment is lower than with summative written examinations when all students undertake the same paper at the same time under the same conditions. Although that improves reliability, there can still be some issues with this (e.g. when using more than one marker) so in view of the heterogeneous nature of SSCs, it will never be possible to achieve a similar level of reliability. However, SSC assessments have high validity as these are specific to the nature of the SSC e.g. a lecture-based SSC may have a written exam as the only assessment whilst a highly clinical one may have an OSCE as a significant component with lesser emphasis on written components (e.g. case reports).</p> <p>Also it is important to emphasise that for all SSCs the overall grade is split between at least one element from both objective and subjective components. For example last year one of our Year 2 External</p>

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		<p>Examiners had a similar query about an A5 grade report as he thought it was more like a B. At this time it was highlighted that one has to also take into account the subjective components of the assessment the PowerPoint (20%) and supervisors assessment (10%). The report makes up 70%. This student could well have had a B grade for the report and compensated in the other elements to bring it up to an A5. Feedback to and from the SSC supervisors confirmed that the students had indeed achieved two top A grades for these components and a B for the report. In future, for review purposes, the grades will be more clearer in order to minimise confusion.</p> <p>In Glasgow consistency in SSC assessment is being addressed in a number of ways.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) We have timetabled training on assessment (about 330 active per year although about 100 of these are distant supervisors offering self proposals so more like 200) – during the Summer 2013, will offer an SSC training afternoon, repeat twice, which will be made available to all supervisors. It also will be recorded and made available online. This has been used introduced at Queen's Medical School and has had a very positive response.</li> <li>2) We have also reduced the number SSCs over the years from 7 to 3 in response to the GMC recommendations and other curriculum demands which overall should increase the assessment reliability for each student experience.</li> <li>3) Although the SSC scores count towards the FPAS rankings these are only a small proportion of the overall score. This means that minor variations in grades make little difference to the final decile placing.</li> <li>4) We provide detailed documentation to all our SSC supervisors including information on the different types of assessment and specific recommendations about how these can be undertaken e.g. reports, oral presentations, audits as well as detailed descriptors for the standards expected at each grade. Given this guidance we permit the supervisors to decide which forms of assessments are appropriate for their module.</li> <li>5) We provide feedback to SSC supervisors from our External Examiners to improve assessment.</li> <li>6) An IT system is being developed and will be implemented in 2013 to provide SSC markers with feedback on the grades, comparing their year</li> </ol>
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		<p>on year performance as well as comparison with overall SSC grading, which will hopefully improve SSC assessment reliability. Also hopefully this will highlighting the 'hawks' and 'doves' and allow supervisors to reflect on their assessment practice.</p> <p>7) Finally we could and have considered imposing a uniform method of assessment for all SSCs, however if this was exercised then much of the practical relevance could be lost, and indeed we could even lose SSCs supervisors if they felt the imposed assessment to be inappropriate.</p>
COS: Scottish Studies Subjects	<p>Q. 5.4 While answering yes to all of the above I did get a sense in one module at least that there was what I would consider an inconsistency in marking. This appears to be where students are given a higher grade for their first piece of work simply because it is their first effort. I can see that this practice is meant to be encouraging but it produces an inconsistency where the second piece of work, which is markedly better, receives the same grade.</p>	<p>We appreciate [REDACTED] careful attention to this matter, and would not wish to be excessively encouraging to students at the expense of consistency and accuracy. We have discussed this with all the tutors (and indeed will bear it in mind across the programme) and have asked the tutors to ensure that the grades are fully justified for the work produced for all pieces of assessment, wherever they sit in the assessment schedule.</p>
Museum Studies: Theory and Practice (MSc/Diploma)	<p>Q. 2.8 From the examination of the full set of marks, it became evident that in this specific cohort the marks were concentrated on the B and A classes. It would be advisable, therefore, that internal examiners consider and use the full range of marks when they mark. I also believe that marking would significantly benefit from more focused marking criteria relevant to the diverse range of the assignments. The introduction of focused criteria would help the internal examiners to be more consistent in the marking of modules such as the [REDACTED], which generated some debate in the BoE in relation to which aspects of the assignment are more important than others.</p>	<p>The external examiner raised a concern that “it became evident that in this specific cohort the marks were concentrated on the B and A classes. It would be advisable, therefore, that internal examiners consider and use the full range of marks when they mark.” The overall grade profile for the 2011-12 cohort was 3 distinctions, 7 merits and 1 pass. We compared this profile with previous cohorts and the overall grade profile did not appear out of line with previous years, within the year to year variation one might expect and in line with our entry tariff and English language requirements. In 2010-11 the profile was 1 distinction and 6 merits and 2009-10 2 merits.</p> <p>The 2011-12 programme was, however, extensively revised and expanded and recruited significantly more students, so direct comparison with previous years is difficult. We are naturally concerned that with an essentially new programme that grade creep could enter. To this end staff were reminded to use the full range of grades available to them. In response to the recommendation that “marking would significantly benefit from more focused marking criteria relevant to the diverse range of the assignments” we produced more detailed assessment criteria for assignments for which the University’s grade related criteria required more detailed iteration, particularly for the</p>

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		Dissertation and Hunterian Exhibition research project that the external drew attention to. This is in addition to our existing iterations that we had already developed to cover essay and project work. We are also paying particular attention to grade profiles across courses, not only within, any moderation required at forthcoming internal examiners meetings.
MLitt European Studies: Cultures, Societies & Languages	Q. 2.4 It would be helpful however if all markers adhered to the same marking scheme. The marks of both markers should be clearly presented as should the agreed mark. If markers have failed to agree on a mark this too should be clearly indicated. Assessed methods are very varied and challenging. Perhaps however in the earlier stages of the programme, at least, students might find a more uniform set of assessment types helpful. I would encourage the School to review this aspect of provision.	All markers do adhere to the same marking scheme; however, some confusion may have arisen due to some presenting numerical marks on the 22-point scale and some primary and secondary bands (A1, B2 etc.). In response to this comment by the External the marking scheme will be explained more clearly in future and both markers' original marks and the agreed mark will be presented in the same format. The range of assessment types was to be reviewed for next year by the Research Committee and the External's remarks will be taken into account when this item is tabled.
Scottish History Levels 1, 2, 3 & Hist 3H/4H	Q. 5.4 While answering yes to all of the above I do think there is an issue over the giving of third class marks. I think there is a reluctance in many cases to go below a lower second. In certain instances it seemed to me that the work deserved a third and the examiners comments seemed to indicate this.	<i>Markscsale:</i> within A band, aim to explain what distinguishes e.g. A2 from A4; monitor A5/B1 threshold where we may be too generous; use full range of marks at bottom end of scale – noted reluctance to give third class marks even where examiners' comments point towards these <b>NOTED, AND A REMINDER TO BE ISSUED BEFORE EXAM MARKING COMMENCES IN APRIL</b>
Financial Accounting (BAcc)	Q. 2.8 here were some situations where it was not quite clear that double blind marking had been undertaken, but I am unsure of the University's policy on this. Occasionally, there were papers where marks were high across the board, to an almost excessive degree, but these were moderated after I raised the issue.  Q. 5.4 I would say that there were extremes at either end of the marking scale - the highest marks were probably too high. The lowest marks were extremely disappointing - I'm surprised to see any honours students fail a course.	██████ argued there was a bias to round marks upwards, resulting in some marks being pushed too high. She noted that the proportion of 1 <sup>st</sup> class marks on three courses she examined was high. ██████ also queried the role of second marking.  There was an extensive debate at the exam board as to where to draw the 1 <sup>st</sup> -2.1 and 2.1-2.2 boundaries, with some externals suggesting our grades were somewhat high, while other externals arguing that the level of awards was comparable to other universities and that with the kind of good students we enrol, one would expect good degree performance.  While the proportion of 1 <sup>st</sup> class marks were particularly high for some of the courses reviewed by ██████, it should be noted that some of these courses had very small number of students, and normal distribution can therefore not necessarily be expected. With small number of self-selected students for such optional courses, it may not be surprising that

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		<p>there are good marks. Indeed, [REDACTED] notes that for e.g., SARF “there was some excellent knowledge shown”. In our review of our exams procedures, colleagues have been reminded that we should be prepared to use the whole scale, as appropriate, when marking – both at the upper and at the lower end. Second markers will also comment on the distribution of marks in their review. We will continue to review the overall distribution of marks, to ensure that standards are maintained.</p> <p>With regard to internal moderation, our policy is that course administrators select a sample of scripts, covering the whole range of student performance, for the second marker to review. Following our review of exams procedures, we have decided that, at the end of marking, the marker/course coordinator should write a paragraph commenting on student performance and any issue with the assessment. This should be sent with the sample of scripts to the internal second marker and the external examiner. The internal second marker will, in addition to reviewing the sample of scripts, review and comment on the distribution of marks for the course.</p>
Chemistry (Organic Chemistry)	Q.8.2 We noted that the average marks for external placements seemed a little high, and the range profile quite narrow. It is particularly important to have a clear system for calibration of marks awarded by external supervisors. There does seem to be (at least) informal scrutiny by the Class Head (I was pleased to see evidence, for example, that full written justification had been actively sought in an example when the external supervisor had awarded a very high mark). It would be good to ensure a formal procedure for calibrating all of the placement marks, and documentation of any discussions where external and Glasgow marks differ significantly.	<p>The School takes on the recommendations of the examiners and will provide the external examiners with the detailed comments from all the assessors that are made to support the marking of the work placements. The placement marking will be moderated in accordance with the procedure used for final year project marking. In addition the placement coordinator will explain the procedures to the external examiners.</p> <p>From 2012/1013 the School of Chemistry will adopt a linear scale for the mapping of grades to the percentage score. This will eliminate any distortion of classification boundaries. The School is required to report grades for the individual courses but with the linear mapping this will allow complete transparency for the students.</p>
Veterinary Animal Husbandry and 2	Q8.2: Consistency of marking between examiners (some essays were marked out of 10, 25 and 100), and variation between internal markers in terms of breakdown of marks given when marking scripts. This made it difficult to follow marking schemes, and may prove difficult when providing student feedback.	<p>The issue regarding scales of marking arose due to the number of different internal examiners on this course, and a lack of communication on how we were all going to mark. We spoke of this at length with the external examiner during the Board of Examiners meeting and totally support his viewpoint. Therefore, from this point forward all internal examiners will be given clear guidance by the course leader on the marking scale to be adopted, and how marks are broken down within</p>

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		each question (if applicable for a multi-part question). It is less likely to be a feature anyway from now on as the disparity in marking scheme was only for the essay questions, and it is unlikely we are continuing with this question format from now on.
MSc Environmental Statistics; Biostatistics; Social Statistics; Statistics; MRes in Advanced Statistics	q. 2.8 For the examination stage all way fine. I feel some improvements could be made for the dissertations • The markers reporting/marketing styles were too inconsistent. Some gave merely ticks, which doesn't really provide an audit trail for such a key component of the marking of the MSc. Also some supervisors marked independence, but it wasn't clear how that factored into the overall mark. You need clearly defined rules and to stick to them. • The mark form you have, coming from UG, probably isn't quite fit for purpose. It would be good if you are going to mark in the different aspects, to have some brief text explaining the decisions made in ALL 4 aspects. • Generally there was good agreement between markers though I think the differentials were not quite right between all students. I gathered at the meeting that calibration checks were used but these were not documented.	<p>The external examiner had commented specifically on the dissertation marking, having noted that the examination stage was fine. He addressed the marking scheme and reporting of the marks, emphasising that clearly defined rules were required that should be adhered to.</p> <p>The Statistics and School LTC have reviewed the comments provided by the external examiner and have agreed that changes should be made to improve parts of the marking process for dissertations. The marking sheet has been updated to provide text boxes relating to each of the four aspects that markers are asked to grade. Markers will be instructed to provide comments as well as marks for each section. We have also made it clearer that the section on the form for rating independence is provided only for information on the level of independence to the second marker. The marks in that section have been replaced by descriptors since the assessment of independence at this stage does not form part of the dissertation mark. The level of 'independence' that the student has shown in the project is incorporated in the mark from the student's oral presentation and their answers to the questions on this presentation.</p> <p>We have a set of defined procedures for dissertation/project marking in that all projects are marked by the project supervisor and a second marker. We have a small number of second markers that each second mark a large proportion of the projects. If there is a discrepancy of 3 grade points or more between the 2 markers then the first and second marker discuss the project, and attempt to reach agreement, and if no agreement is found a third marker is brought into the process. This process will be noted on the final mark sheets.</p> <p>The small team of second markers meet to discuss the dissertation marks overall as a further calibration step. This step of the process was not written down formally but will be done in future documentation and a minute provided to the external.</p>
MBCbB 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	Q2.8..There were, however, still some inconsistencies in marking and the short notes type questions provides more opportunity for this	We aim to minimise inconsistency by having a single examiner mark all scripts for a specific question; by asking markers to provide marking schemes in advance; and - where they have accepted answers



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	<p>to occur. More thought should be given to this. Furthermore, although we did see the criteria for the longer questions, markers did not all keep to them on every occasion, but they were consistent with all their marking. This is an area that can be tightened up.</p>	<p>that that differ from those anticipated - to provide an adapted marking scheme. Even so, local policy of not annotating exam scripts may make it difficult for external examiners to see where marks have been allocated. We are currently reviewing this policy. In addition, we are constantly striving to make the short note questions more structured, to minimise variation in possible answers. Longer-term, we may want to consider whether to retain them, but we think they have merits (possibility for demonstrating depth of knowledge, allowing for demonstration of higher-level intellectual abilities – e.g. compare and contrast questions). This is possibly an area for discussion at the MAC, or with our Programme External.</p>
<p>Human Nutrition (MScMedSci), Clinical Nutrition, (MScMedSci), Human Nutrition (PGDip)</p>	<p>Q. 2.8 The general level of agreement between markers is extremely good, although there were several occasions where the marks awarded differ by more than two grades. Further attention needs to be directed towards achieving better agreement between markers.</p>	<p>Whilst improving on previous years, there still remain a small number of scripts/assessments where the disparity between markers is greater than two grades... we have discussed this at programme team meetings; however, there are always some scripts which markers view differently, possibly due to their own interpretation of the questions. The two markers discuss their marks and how they arrived at them in order to reach a consensus. In a very small minority of cases (less than 2%), no consensus is reached and the work is then passed to a third marker, who marks it and a further discussion ensues. Generally, the two markers, who mark blind, have good agreement however when agreement cannot be reached the system of using a third marker ensures that a fair mark is reached. We will request that the programme team clearly communicate on the marking sheet the discussion which took place to agree the consensus mark, particularly if the two marks were widely different. We will also ask them to refer more carefully to the marking criteria.</p>
<p>Neuroscience</p>	<p>Q8.2 Grading scale. Notwithstanding the requirement that staff must adhere to the University-wide 22 point marking scale, I was surprised to find that it is implemented in one, two or even (n one instance) three ways. For example a script could be given a grade of 15, B1 (or even B+). On some scripts only one (or other) marking scheme was used and on others both. It is important that staff are encouraged to use a single scale. If an additional scale is viewed as useful (for example a numerical grade might be beneficial for data entry and averaging in spread</p>	<p>Subject area had sent interim response stating that they considered the issues raised to be fairly general and not necessarily specific to neuroscience. They checked with the school on the SLS 'policy' on these issues. No further update was received by the Senate Office.</p>

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	<p>sheets) then this could possibly be added in parenthesis on the scripts. I think that having multiple scales used simultaneously invites errors to creep in. Script annotation. I noted a lack of consistency in the way that examination scripts were annotated and found several instances where the assessment regulations and guidelines were not being adhered to. On some there was a complete lack of marks or comments. On others there were comments on the script which are extremely helpful as they allow external examiners to better understand why a particular mark was give. On other scripts there were no added comments but 1st marker notes appeared on the inside back page. This information is also extremely helpful for an external to be able to understand why a particular grade was given. In discussions with staff at the Board of Examiners meeting I detected a fear in some of litigation from students dissatisfied with their degree classification. To the contrary my view is that the presence of critical comments justifying a particular grade will protect the system in the event of a Freedom of Information request and displays a robustness of process in the assessment of student performance.</p>	
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