

Marking RVC Exams, Coursework & Projects

This document outlines the process of marking exams, coursework and projects at the RVC. Any examiner who is not clear about their duties at any stage of an examination process should contact the Examinations Office, the Year Leader/Exam Convenor or the Academic Director of Assessment for advice.

1. General Requirements

- 1.1. Each type of assessment in an examination shall be marked according to the appropriate marking criteria and marking scheme stated in the Assessment and Award Regulations, approved for each course. RVC marking schemes are public documents and can be found on the appropriate section of the website. Where model answers are provided, these should indicate how marks are allocated.
- 1.2. A candidate answering the wrong question shall be awarded zero marks. In the event whereby a student answers more questions in a section than was indicated in the examination instructions, the FIRST QUESTION(S) ONLY in the section will be marked, unless the response to the first question is incomplete, in which case the NEXT question will be accepted. In the event whereby there are multiple incomplete answers, the question(s) with the most complete responses (in terms of mark allocation) will be selected for marking. Question responses surplus to that requested will NOT be marked. Any part of a script which is considered by the Examiners to be illegible will be awarded no marks.
- 1.3. The marking of written scripts and, where possible, individual items of coursework shall be conducted in such a way as to preserve the anonymity of candidates.

2. Examiners: Who is required to mark and sample different types of examination?

- 2.1. **Theses:** MRes, PhD, and other doctorate levels: These are marked under separate regulations and examiners are informed of their duties directly by the postgraduate team of the Examinations Office.
- 2.2. **Major research projects:** Research projects that make a substantial contribution to the degree classification should be independently double marked and markers should subsequently come to an agreed mark.
 - 2.2.1. Where marks have been awarded within the same classification, or the marks are adjacent on the RVC Common Grading Scheme, but span different classifications, the internal examiners should discuss the work and come to an agreed mark.
 - 2.2.2. Where internal examiners disagree across a broader range of marks, spanning classifications, an experienced member of academic staff will be nominated to act as a facilitator, to liaise with the internal examiners in discussion and agreement of the final mark. The facilitator will be responsible for confirming the process was fair and transparent. The facilitator will normally be expected to attend the Examinations Board, should any clarification be required from the External Examiners.
 - 2.2.3. In all cases, the internal examiners are responsible for synthesising and submitting a joint feedback statement, which aligns with the agreed mark, and which will be released to the student.

2.3. **Summative Assessments other than major projects** (written exams, ICAs, etc):

- A variety of examiners should mark the answers to different questions in one examination.
- Answers to individual questions / coursework can be marked either by a single examiner, or in the case of large numbers of candidates, by a team of examiners.
- All marked answers should undergo a quality assurance process, either by sample marking (Appendix 2: Sample Marking) or as part of the team marking process (Appendix 3: Team Marking).

3. **Marking: What are the examiners required to do?**

- 3.1. **Coursework & Projects:** Examiners should provide feedback for students such that their rationale for awarding a specific mark from the appropriate grading scheme can clearly be linked to the descriptors on that grading scheme. They must also record their mark awarded on the work itself or marking area.
- 3.2. **Examination Scripts/Submissions:** Examiners must provide feedback in relation to the model or sample answer and demonstrate the rationale for the grade they award.

4. **Quality Control: How are we assured itself or is marking correct?**

- 4.1. In the case of single response answers such as MCQs the marking is totally objective, but response statistics will be compiled on each question, so that the examiners have an opportunity to evaluate the reliability and validity of the question. Questions that are identified as anomalous may be moderated.
- 4.2. Sampling is unnecessary in assessments that are double marked under section 2.
- 4.3. Where there is a subjective element to marking a written submission; there must be a quality assurance process. In the case of a single examiner who marks a question in its entirety, their marking should be sampled. The role of the sample marker is to review the marking and feedback provided to determine if the marking has been carried out correctly and consistently. For sample marking, the rate is 10% for marking batches of greater than 50 responses and 20% for marking batches fewer than 50 responses (or 5 pieces of work, whichever is greater).
- 4.4. In the case of team marking, the Lead Marker will brief the marking team on the application of the model answer in advance and make arrangements for group marking at the beginning of the marking process. Once marking is complete, the Lead Marker will ensure agreement for failed scripts and evaluation of scripts from different grading bands and across the team of individual markers.
- 4.5. In the case of tutor/supervisor-led marking, individual tutors or supervisors are responsible for compliance with the marking scheme and a Lead Academic is responsible for ensuring that the marks awarded are fair and transparent. Once marking is complete, the Lead Academic should review failed scripts, ensure marks have been justified and screen for any examiner effect on outcomes.
- 4.6. Where the quality assurance process indicates a cause for concern about the marking, the Year or Module Leader and the Examination Board Chair will initially convene and decide on an appropriate course of action, which they will present for approval from the External Examiners.

- 4.7. All scripts and other work shall be available to the External Examiners together with the full mark sheet. The External Examiners are invited to scrutinise the marking of:
 - 4.7.1. Any candidate whom they determine is on the borderline between any two classifications.
 - 4.7.2. Any question where the distribution of marks is abnormally skewed.
 - 4.7.3. Any candidate whose mark for a question appears to be out of line with the rest of their performance.
- 4.8. Where the quality assurance process has indicated that marking is satisfactory and the marking is approved by the External Examiners, all marks awarded will be subject to ratification by the Examination Board.

Marking RVC Examinations – Appendix 2 Arrangements for Sample Marking

Where there is a subjective element to marking a written submission and a single examiner has marked a question (or a component of a question) in its entirety, their marking should be sampled. This does not apply to written submissions that are double marked, or those submissions where team marking is employed.

The rate of sampling is 10% for marking batches where there are more than 50 responses to be marked and 20% where there are fewer than 50 responses to be marked (or 5 pieces of work, whichever is greater).

The sample marker is tasked with reviewing the examiner feedback and marks awarded for each question to decide whether their marks are justified and adequately reflect the academic standard of the response, compared with the model answer / marking scheme. The sample marker should review a range of marks across all grade categories.

The sample marker is required to indicate whether they AGREE or DISAGREE with the mark(s) awarded; they are not required to indicate a separate mark. It is considered reasonable for a sample marker to agree with the first mark, if the mark they would have awarded is adjacent and/or in the same classification category.

If the sample marker disagrees with a sufficient proportion (typically 10% or more) of the marks or there are other concerns about the consistency or standard of marking (e.g. lack of feedback), they will inform the Examinations Office. The Examinations Office will alert the Chair of the Examinations Board and the Year Leader/Exam Convenor. In discussion with the Academic Director of Assessment and External Examiners, an action plan appropriate to the concerns expressed will be devised and implemented.

The Exam Board Chair, Year Leader/Exam Convenor and Academic Director of Assessment will consider the overall likely material impact of the concerns raised and take action to minimise the risk of producing erroneous results. Such action might include a complete re-mark by a new set of examiners, a remark of all pieces of work initially marked by a given examiner, discarding a proportion of each answer and re-calculating the residual marks, and discarding an examination question from the final marks for a paper.

The choice of action will depend on the proportion of the examination or nature of work that is of concern and the accumulated material impact its marks could have on students' overall results and progression. Provision of reliable results should be prioritised over deadlines, and this may require delaying Examination Boards and/or the release of results. In the event of time-consuming remedial action, such as a complete re-mark, the final publication of the results and some parts of the Examination Board business may have to be delayed. Students should be informed of any delay to release marks at the earliest possible opportunity.

Marking RVC Examinations – Appendix 3

Arrangements for Team and Tutor/Supervisor-led Marking

Team marking is normally used when it is difficult to meet the marking deadline using only one individual marker and usually applies to written submissions from the larger cohorts of RVC students (such as BVetMed, or BVetMed with BVSc). Tutor/supervisor-led marking is used for marking of assignments (such as BSc1 library project and BVetMed2 CATR), whereby several academic members of staff each mark a relatively small number of submissions.

Team marking

Marking teams should have an appointed Lead Marker, who is responsible for briefing the marking team with respect to marking procedures and interpretation of the marking scheme, to ensure consistency in marking.

The Lead Marker will coordinate the marking team to collaborate in marking the first 10 scripts together (i.e. in-person or online), to allow a dialogue around interpretation of the model answer, to ensure that the marking scheme is consistently applied by all members of the team.

After marking has been completed, all failing submissions must be reviewed, such that at least TWO members of academic staff agree on awarding a FAIL mark.

Statistical methods (e.g. the Kruskal Wallis test) may be used to evaluate parity of marking across the marking team. This will help to identify any examiner effect (doves/hawks). If any outliers are identified, their marking should be formally sample marked (according to Appendix 2)

Teams should carry out additional methods of quality assurance, such as conferring on a proportion of submissions (e.g. 10% of scripts per marker) across the range of grades awarded to check for consistency.

Tutor/supervisor-led marking

Tutors or supervisors must be informed of the marking scheme being used for the assignment being assessed and the feedback required when submitting a final grade. After marking has been completed, all failing submissions should be reviewed by the Lead Academic. Statistical methods (e.g. the Kruskal Wallis test) may be used to evaluate parity of marking across the cohort of tutors/supervisors. This will help to identify any examiner effect (doves/hawks). If any outliers are identified, their marking should be reviewed and moderated where necessary.