

NEA Support

Moderation of Centre Assessed work

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How adjustments to Centre Assessed marks are made

Introduction

When results are issued to schools, details of students' final marks for centre assessed units/components are included. By comparing these marks with the original centre marks, schools can see whether their marking in a particular unit/component was accepted without any change or whether adjustments were made.

The feedback form sent on results day will include details about the reasons for any adjustments in each component/unit.

When an adjustment has been made, centres may wish to know how the final marks were determined. This document explains the process used.

Why is moderation necessary?

OxfordAQA specifications that contain centre assessed work indicate that moderation must be carried out on any assessments marked by centres.

Marking student work uses human judgement and when that student work is moderated, there can be disagreement between the original school marker(s) and the moderator. Those assessing the same piece of work may disagree over the clarity of the answer being given, or the level of skill and knowledge being demonstrated. It is also possible that the same person looking at the same piece of work at different times may make different judgements without being 'wrong' either time.

It is possible to reduce judgmental differences with practice, experience and discussion, but they will always exist. For this reason, a small **tolerance** is allowed on centre marking. If the differences between a moderator's marking and a school's marking are within this tolerance, the differences can be taken as a legitimate variation in judgement and the centre marks can be accepted. If the differences are outside the tolerance, an adjustment will be needed to align the school's standard of marking with the agreed OxfordAQA standard.

How is moderation carried out?

OxfordAQA centre assessed units/components will require a sample of work from each school for moderation. Once the centre marks have been submitted via Centre Services, in most components a sample is generated by the system. This indicates which students' work should be included in the sample.

Guidance on the sampling arrangements for each component can be found [here](#). Samples will be uploaded for moderation via Centre Services. Full instructions on submitting samples can be found in our [NEA administration](#) section on the website.

The moderator starts by considering part of this sample (called the **sub-sample**):

- If the moderator agrees with the marks in this sub-sample (to within the specified tolerance), then no change is needed.
- If the school's marks for any of the work in the sub-sample are outside tolerance, the moderator considers further work from the sample, and any necessary adjustment to the school's marks is made using the regression technique described below.

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The volume of work inspected by the moderator at this stage depends on the pattern of differences between the school's marks and the moderator's marks.

- If there is a consistent pattern (even where the differences are large), a fair adjustment can be made from inspecting the work of a relatively small number of students.
- If the pattern is less consistent, the whole sample needs to be inspected.
- In exceptional circumstances, when an adjustment which is fair to all students cannot be found from the sample, at that point the moderator will request further work (often the work of all students) from the school.

Moderation of the sample (or sub-sample) is **not** a re-assessment of the individual students involved. It would be unfair to amend the marks of these students on a different basis from the marks of the other students at the school. Instead, the sample is intended to be **representative** of the marking standard at the school, to indicate whether an adjustment is needed, and to determine the nature and scale of that adjustment.

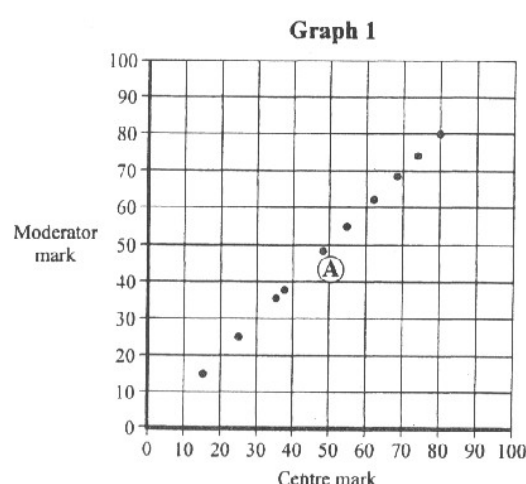
Therefore, there is a requirement that the school's marking is internally standardised. For further information on internal standardisation see the [Teacher Online Standardisation section](#) on the OxfordAQA website. As OxfordAQA standards align to UK standards, the information on the JCQ website should also be adhered to - [Non-Examination Assessments - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#).

Where schools are in a consortium (i.e. several schools are working together in a subject with joint assessment arrangements), OxfordAQA must be informed. We will then take account of the consortium arrangement when carrying out moderation, for example by applying the same set of adjustments to all the centres if the marking is out of tolerance. The consortium arrangements, including each centre number, must be sent to info@oxfordaqa.com.

How is regression used to make adjustments?

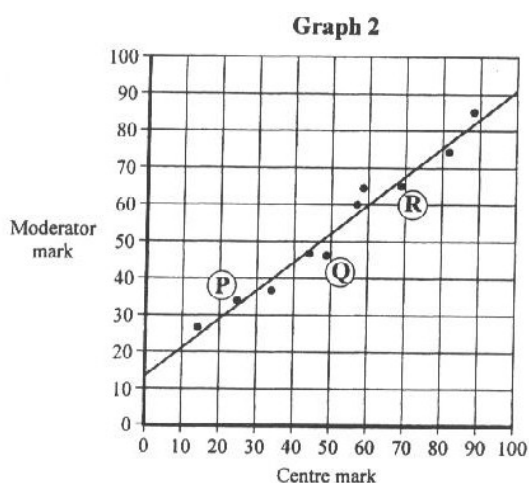
Regression compares two variables (in this case, centre marks and moderator marks) to find the relationship between them. Plotting a graph of moderator marks and centre marks for the students in a sample can help you visualise and understand this concept.

If the moderator marked a sample of ten students and agreed with every one of the marks, the result would be as shown in Graph 1.



Graph 1: This figure illustrates the situation where the moderator has agreed with all the marks awarded by the school to each of the student e.g. Student A was given 49 marks by both the school marker and the moderator.

The school marker and moderator will often disagree on some (or even all) marks given. Graph 2 shows another 10 students, this time with some disagreement between the school marks and the moderator marks.

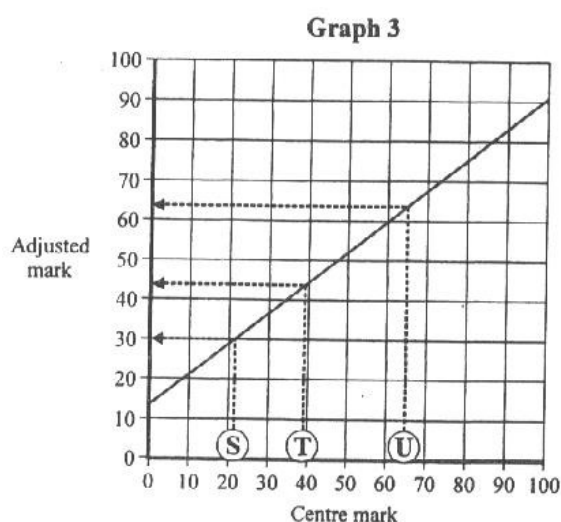


Graph 2: This figure illustrates the situation where the moderator and school marker have disagreed on some marks. Student P was given 24 marks by the school and 34 by the moderator; student Q was given 49 marks by the school and 46 by the moderator, and student R was given 69 marks by the school and 65 by the moderator. A line has been drawn to show the general trend of the points.

The points do not lie exactly on a straight line, but there is an obvious trend. A line has been drawn to show this trend. This line is known as the **regression** line.

The regression line can be used to adjust the marks. OxfordAQA calculates the formula for this line from the sample centre marks and moderator marks, which can then be used to adjust the marks for all students in the school.

This is illustrated in Graph 3. Using the regression line, the centre mark for each student can be mapped to an adjusted mark. This serves as a predicted mark that the moderator would have given the given student based on the work reviewed by the moderator from the sample.



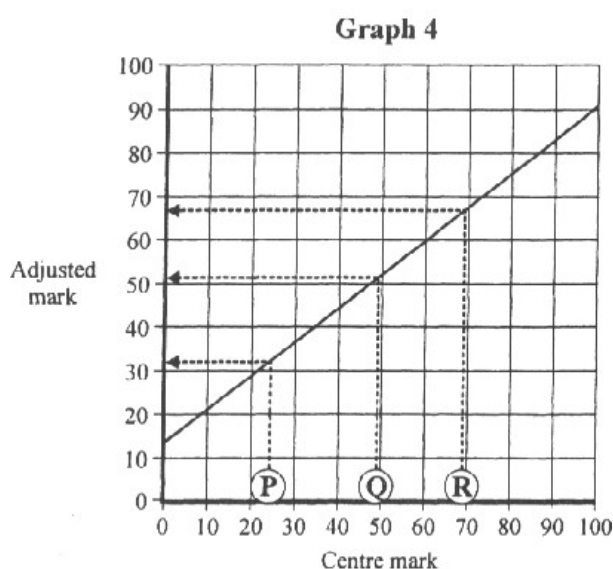
Graph 3: This figure illustrates how adjusted marks are predicted from the centre marks using the regression line. E.g. The school gave Student S a mark of 21, Student T a mark of 39 and Student U a mark of 65. These marks are adjusted, using the regression line, to 30, 44 and 64 respectively, as shown by the broken lines.

Moderation of Centre Assessed work

To retain the school's rank order of marks, and to ensure that students whose work was sampled are treated no differently from other students at the school, the marks of **all** students are adjusted using the regression line, whether or not their work was seen by the moderator.

The procedure, which is used to find the best match of the school's marks to the general standard, does not guarantee that students in the sample will get the mark which the moderator gave to their work.

Graph 4 shows what happens to the marks of Students P, Q and R from Graph 2.



Graph 4: This figure illustrates how the adjusted marks are predicted using the regression line for Students P, Q and R from Graph 2. E.g. Student Q has a centre mark of 49 and a moderator mark of 46 (as shown in Graph 2), but this student's final (adjusted) mark is 52, as shown in Graph 4.

The table below gives the original centre mark, the moderator mark and the adjust mark for Students P, Q and R.

Student	Centre mark	Moderator mark	Adjusted mark
P	24	34	32
Q	49	46	52
R	69	65	67

Feedback to schools

Each school is sent a feedback form which covers matters such as the appropriateness of the tasks (where they are set by the school), the accuracy of the assessment and administration.

Enquiries about results

In line with other awarding bodies OxfordAQA offers a post-results review of moderation. This is intended to check that the assessment criteria were fairly, reliable and consistently applied in the original moderation process. For details, please see the [Post Results Services page](#).

Application of the system to all schools

For each school where the sub-sample is out of tolerance, provisional adjustments are made as illustrated in Graph 4. If the adjusted marks fall within tolerance, the centre marks are accepted unchanged. Otherwise, the adjustments suggested by our systems are normally applied. In a small number of cases, marks are reviewed manually and overruled.

Summary

In summary, moderation has three possible outcomes.

- (i) Small differences between the school's marks and the moderator's marks for the students in the (sub-)sample, **the centre's marks are accepted for all students**.
- (ii) Larger differences, but the moderator generally agrees with the centre's rank ordering of the students, **the regression technique is used to adjust the marks of all students**.
- (iii) In exceptional cases, where the moderator disagrees significantly with the centre's rank ordering, either
 - the moderator re-marks further work (possibly the work of all students) before the final marks are determined, *or*
 - the centre is asked to review its marking and then a new sample is selected for moderation.

Marks are not altered unless necessary, and only in a manner which treats all students and schools equitably.

For further support or guidance, please [contact us](#)

End of guide

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