



**CITY OF LONDON COLLEGE**

CHANGING FUTRES - ASPIRING SUCCESS

# **Standardisation of Assessment Outcomes Policy 2026**

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**1. Introduction** - The College is committed to ensuring that higher education assessment outcomes are fair, reliable, valid and consistent across modules, programmes and cohorts. The standardisation of assessment outcomes is a fundamental mechanism through which the College safeguards academic standards, protects student interests and maintains public confidence in the value of its awards. Standardisation is not a process of artificially adjusting grade distributions or normalising results against predetermined quotas. Rather, it is a structured academic quality assurance process through which marking judgements are aligned with published criteria, level descriptors and intended learning outcomes.

This policy sets out how the College standardises assessment outcomes through calibration, moderation, statistical oversight, external scrutiny and formal academic decision-making processes.

**2. Purpose and Scope** – The policy also applies to all summative assessments contributing to module marks and award classifications within higher education provision delivered by the College. The purpose of the policy is to:

- Ensure consistent application of marking criteria and grade descriptors.
- Protect parity of standards across modules and programmes.
- Provide transparent and defensible academic decision-making.
- Align assessment outcomes with national academic benchmarks.
- Demonstrate compliance with regulatory expectations

**3. Regulatory and Sector Alignment** - The policy aligns with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education maintained by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, which requires that assessment is reliable, consistent and aligned to intended learning outcomes. The College operates within the regulatory framework of the Office for Students. In accordance with the Conditions of Registration relating to quality and standards, the College ensures that students are assessed effectively, assessment is valid and reliable, academic standards are consistent with sector-recognised benchmarks and award decisions are credible and defensible.

The policy is also aligned with the Student Regulations Framework, moderation practices and board structures of Plymouth Marjon University, ensuring parity of standards and consistency of governance processes.

**4. Principles of Standardisation** - Standardisation at the College is underpinned by the following principles.

- Academic judgement must be criterion-referenced and aligned to intended learning outcomes.
- Assessment standards must be applied consistently across markers and cohorts.
- Moderation and review processes must be proportionate, transparent and documented.
- Statistical review supports, but does not replace, academic judgement.
- External oversight strengthens comparability and public confidence.
- Standardisation protects students from inconsistency and ensures that achievement, not variability in marking practice, determines outcomes.

**5. Pre-Assessment Standardisation and Calibration** - Standardisation begins prior to marking. During module planning and approval, assessment briefs and marking criteria are reviewed to ensure clarity, alignment with learning outcomes and level appropriateness. Before marking commences, module teams conduct calibration meetings. These meetings involve:

- Reviewing assessment criteria and institutional grade descriptors.
- Discussing threshold standards and distinctions between grade bands.
- Considering exemplar scripts or benchmark work where appropriate.

This ensures shared understanding among markers and reduces variability in academic judgement.

**6. Marking, Moderation and Internal Quality Assurance** - All summative assessments are marked

by appropriately qualified academic staff. Internal moderation procedures ensure consistency and fairness. Depending on module size and risk profile, this may include independent second marking of a sample or all scripts and moderation of representative samples across grade bands, including fail, borderline and high distinction work. Moderators review the alignment between marks awarded, marking criteria and feedback provided. Where inconsistencies are identified, discussion takes place and marks may be revised to ensure fairness and coherence. All moderation activity is documented and retained in accordance with institutional records management requirements.

**7. Statistical Review and Cohort Analysis** - Following moderation, Programme Leaders and Quality Assurance staff review cohort-level data. This includes analysis of:

- Grade distributions.
- Mean and median scores.
- Comparison with previous cohorts.
- Patterns across markers or modules.

Unusual trends, significant deviations or evidence of potential grade inflation or deflation are investigated through academic discussion. Statistical analysis informs reflective review but does not automatically trigger numerical adjustment of marks.

**8. External Examiner Oversight** - External Examiners provide independent scrutiny of assessment standards and processes. They review samples of assessed work across grade ranges, evaluate the appropriateness of marking standards and confirm comparability with sector norms. Their observations are reported formally and considered by Academic Board and the Quality and Standards Committee. External Examiner oversight provides assurance that the College's standards align with national expectations and with comparable institutions.

**9. Assessment Boards and Confirmation of Outcomes** - All marks remain provisional until confirmed by the relevant Assessment Board. Assessment Boards review moderated marks, confirm module outcomes, consider progression and award decisions in accordance with academic regulations and ensure consistent application of classification rules.

Boards operate under defined terms of reference and quorum requirements aligned with the framework of Plymouth Marjon University. Decisions are formally recorded and communicated to students following ratification.

**10. Cross-Programme Consistency and Prevention of Grade Drift** - The College monitors standards across programmes to prevent grade drift and ensure long-term comparability. Annual monitoring processes review grade profiles and trends. Periodic review examines assessment design and marking standards at programme level. Where necessary, institutional calibration workshops are conducted to reinforce shared understanding of standards.

The College recognises that maintaining consistent standards over time is essential to protecting the value of its awards.

**11. Roles and Responsibilities** – The Academic Board holds ultimate responsibility for academic standards and assessment outcomes. The Quality and Standards Committee oversees implementation of this policy and reviews moderation and assessment board reports. Programme Leaders ensure coherence of assessment practice across modules. Module Leaders are responsible for calibration meetings, marking and ensuring moderation processes are completed, registry manages assessment board administration and records and external examiners provide independent academic assurance.

**12. Academic Governance and Management Oversight** - The College maintains a layered governance structure to ensure academic and management oversight. The Academic Board receives reports on assessment outcomes, moderation compliance and External Examiner feedback. The Quality and Standards Committee monitors risk indicators such as unusual grade distributions, differential attainment and feedback timeliness. The Board of Governors and the Senior Management Team (SMT) receives summary reports to ensure institutional oversight and regulatory compliance.

This integrated governance framework ensures transparency, accountability and defensibility of academic decisions.

**13. Monitoring, Reporting and Continuous Enhancement** - Standardisation processes are reviewed annually through programme monitoring and periodic review. Feedback from External Examiners, student surveys and internal audits informs enhancement planning. Staff development sessions are offered where calibration or moderation issues are identified. The College views standardisation not solely as compliance but as a mechanism for academic enhancement and professional development.

**THE END**