BS.10/11-xi
(Revision of BS.05/06-12)

University of Durham

Department of Mathematical Sciences

Current Practice in Marking and Tutoring

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This document provides markers and tutors with guidance and references to the departmental documentation on the policies relevant to marking and tutoring.

1. Extract from the **Assessment Criteria document (BS.10/11-xd)**:

   Formative[1] assessment of coursework occurs at all Levels, while summative continuous assessment of coursework occurs for the auxiliary [2] Level I Mathematics modules, MATH1041 and MATH2051.

   Guidelines for exercises preparation: The purpose of formative assessment of coursework is to help the student at each stage of the learning process. It is designed to encourage effort all year long and provides manageable milestones, in preparation for the summative assessment of end of year examinations. Course lecturers provide problems of an appropriate standard and length to the students, as well as assessment templates (model solutions) to the markers.

   - ***Core A, B1 & B2 (MATH1012, MATH1051 & MATH1041)***:
     Lecturers set problems *to hand in* on a *weekly* basis and problems to prepare for *tutorials* on a *weekly* basis, with the exception of Problem-solving in core B2.
     Tutorials are organised by subject rather than module to allow for more versatility in the choice of tutors, especially in Epiphany where specialized knowledge might be required.
     Tutors collect, mark (possibly by a marker) and return the work of their tutees. They keep a record of attendance at tutorials and of assignments marks.
   - ***Auxiliary modules (MATH1031, MATH1541, MATH1551, MATH1561, MATH1571, MATH1711)***: Lecturers are responsible for all aspects of their courses. Problems are normally set and marked (with assistance) weekly, and the grades recorded. The grades will count towards the examination. Tutors keep a record of attendance at tutorials/practicals. The course director keeps an eye on the attendance/mark database and is responsible for notifying students if they are performing unsatisfactorily (see below).
   - ***2H***: The subjects are taught every week, but scheduled tutorials occur fortnightly. In addition, there will be one Problems Class led by the lecturer every other week, in alternance with the tutorials.

[1] Summative assessment counts towards the overall mark for the module. Formative assessment does not.
[2] MATH1031, MATH1541, MATH1551, MATH1561, MATH1571, MATH1711

Lecturers set problems, at least fortnightly, including questions to be marked, routine questions which are not marked, but for which model solutions are provided a few days after the questions are assigned, and questions to prepare for tutorials.

The lecturers collect the assignments and distribute them to markers. The latter mark promptly and return the scripts to the lecturers who record the marks in the database and return the scripts to students.

- ***3H/4H***: Lecturers are responsible for all aspects of their courses. It is normal practice to set four or five assignments per term. Amongst these two exam style questions (per term) are set to be handed in, marked and graded. A record is kept of grades assigned, in the database. The remainder of the assignments are not marked. Detailed and complete model solutions are provided (promptly) for the students for all assignments. In the case of reading courses and independent study modules the lecturer may make different arrangements about marking and work set.

Assessment criteria: Each script is returned to the student with the grade written on it. The interpretation of grades is as in Table 1.

Grade	**Equivalent Mark**	**Quality**
A	$> 80\%$	*Essentially complete and correct work*
B	60%—79%	*Shows understanding, but contains a small number of errors or gaps*
C	40%—59%	*Clear evidence of a serious attempt at the work, showing some understanding, but with important gaps*
D	20%—39%	*Scrappy work, bare evidence of understanding or significant work omitted*
E	$<20\%$	*No understanding or little real attempt made*

Table 1.

Remark: *A grade C is deemed acceptable. D/E or a failure to hand in work is a demerit. If say 4 questions of equal standard are set and 2 are answered very well and 2 are not tackled at all then there is close to 50% attainment, resulting in grade C.*

The returned scripts should indicate clearly where errors and gaps in arguments occur, and the nature of errors. They should give brief indications as to the approach required, bearing in mind that model solutions for all set problems will be provided to students by lecturers shortly after the marking has occurred. The lecturer makes relevant model solutions available to students via the course webpage or/and Durham On-Line (DUO) shortly after they have submitted their assignments.

2. Specific remarks for undergraduate markers [3]:

   - The lecturer of a given second year course (if there are several lecturers for a course, one means the Michaelmas lecturer) acts as a mentor for all student markers of that course. The latter should be reminded of consulting the relevant course webpages for academic resources, or/and should be enrolled as graders for the relevant modules within Durham On-Line (DUO). It is the lecturer's responsibility to ensure the markers are comfortable with the material they mark.
   - The undergraduate markers receive the marking shortly after the assignments are due and should mark promptly. They return the marked scripts to the lecturer in charge, who includes the records in the database.
   - As part of a quality assurance mechanism, lecturers and relevant markers are encouraged to spend some time at the return of the marked scripts, to reflect on student patterns of achievement. It is the lecturer's responsibility to ensure that the marking is homogeneous. To that effect, it is good practice to organise the scripts according to the tutorial groups, and ensure that markers mark different tutorial groups each time.

3. Specific remarks for postgraduate markers and tutors [4]:

   - Each new postgraduate student is assigned a mentor for their teaching or marking duties who is a permanent member of the teaching staff.
   - The postgraduate tutors are observed by academic staff at least once in the academic year as part of: their academic development and support; a quality assurance mechanism.

[3] See the **Policy on Training Undergraduate Student Markers (BS.10/11-xg)** for more details
[4] See the **Policy on Training Postgraduate Students (BS.10/11-xf)** for more details