

Section 52 Scaling of marks policy

52.1 Purpose

52.1.1 This policy details the criteria and procedures for School Assessment Boards to apply scaling of marks at a component or module level in exceptional circumstances. This applies where a set of marks for a module or assessment component are deemed to not accurately reflect what other sources of evidence would show to be an expected level of student achievement, and where all students appear to have been disadvantaged by an exceptional circumstance impacting upon the normal operation of the programme of study as declared by the Chair of Academic Board.

52.2 Definition

52.2.1 **Scaling** is the adjustment of marks for an entire cohort carried out on an assessment component or final module mark so that the marks better reflect the achievement of the students as defined by the Generic Assessment Descriptors.

52.3 Scope

- 52.3.1 This policy applies to students enrolled on programmes delivered in whole by the University, or in whole or part by a franchise partner institution (franchise provision).
- 52.3.2 The procedure to be followed for scaling of marks in relation to programmes delivered by a validated partner organisation (validated provision) will be set out in agreement between the University and the validated partner organisation in an exceptional circumstance impacting upon the normal operation of the programme of study.

52.4 Principles

- 52.4.1 Scaling is a process which may be employed, on an exceptional basis, to enable the mean mark for a given module or assessment component to fall within expected ranges derived from either:
- a) Previous student performance within the module over an appropriate time period (e.g., 3 years).
- or
- b) The range of mean marks in all or part of that particular year of study for all modules taken by a given cohort of students.
- 52.4.2 Scaling is not a mechanistic process, but one which requires academic judgement, the key question being whether marks fairly reflect student achievement as described in Generic Assessment Descriptors. The use of scaling should therefore be exceptional.
- 52.4.3 Scaling should only occur after marking and moderation (including double marking or internal moderation) as set out in [section 30](#) 'Marking and Moderation Policy'.
- 52.4.4 Scaling should be applied fairly to all students taking the module and not just a subset (e.g., students who have not achieved a pass mark).
- 52.4.5 The process of scaling must not result in any mark being lower after adjustment than it was before the adjustment was applied.
- 52.4.6 Scaling must not be applied to assessments for which a zero mark has been awarded for non-submission.
- 52.4.7 Application of a scaling algorithm must not result in any module or assessment component mark which is greater than 100.
- 52.4.8 The rank order of students after scaling must be the same as the rank order of students before scaling.
- 52.4.9 Authority to apply scaling lies with the School Assessment Board under the delegated authority of the Progress and Award Examination Panel and Academic Board. The basis for applying scaling and the algorithm used must be clearly recorded.

52.5 Process

- 52.5.1 After completion of the moderation process for each module, and any resulting adjustments to marks have been made, the range of mean marks for all modules within a year of study that contribute to the final award should be reviewed.
- 52.5.2 As part of this review process, School Assessment Panels (SAPs) will review mean module marks against the range of mean marks for the module or a predecessor module (i.e., where a programme has been revalidated) in the previous 3 years. Where data is not available, SAPs should review the module mean mark against the range of mean marks in all or part of the particular year of study.
- 52.5.3 The range within which the mean should not be lower than that determined from the highest and lowest mean mark (rounded to the nearest whole integer) from the previous 3 years, or from a minimum of 3 modules studied by the majority of the student cohort in all or part of the particular year of study.
- 52.5.4 The range of expected mean module marks may differ between programmes of study, cohorts, and Schools, but in each case will be based on the evidence of student performance.
- 52.5.5 After investigation of any module with a mean mark outside the expected range derived from [section 51.1.1](#), the marks can be either:
- a) **Confirmed**, if the marks awarded are deemed to be a fair and accurate reflection of student performance on the module in comparison with performance on other modules in the same year of study.
- or
- b) **Scaled**, either for the module or for an individual assessment component, if the marks awarded are lower than the lowest mean mark for the module in the previous 3 years of study, or lower than the lowest mean mark from a minimum of 3 modules studied by the majority of the student cohort in all or part of the particular year of study.
- 52.5.6 If applied, scaling should take place using 1 of algorithms described in [section 52.6.1](#) below, to be agreed with the external examiner, such that the mean is changed by the least amount in order to lie within the expected range.
- 52.5.7 The scaled marks are recommended by the SAP to the School Assessment Board (SAB) for approval. Therefore, scaled marks must be available in SITS in good time prior to the SAB to allow progression and award decisions to be calculated using these marks.

The approved scaled marks are used for determining progression or award SAB recommendations to the Progress and Award Examination Panel (PAEP). The School Assessment Board must complete a single 'SAB Special Resolution' form to report to PAEP all the modules/assessments that were scaled at the Board. Separate forms are not required for every module/assessment.

52.6 Scaling algorithm

- 52.6.1 The following scaling algorithms may be used:
- a) **Fixed number:** scaling in which a fixed number (e.g., 3) is added to all marks for a module or assessment component, as long as no scaled mark is greater than 100.
- or
- b) **Multiplication by a factor:** scaling in which every mark is multiplied by the same factor (e.g., 1.01) and rounded to the nearest whole integer, as long as no scaled mark is greater than 100.
- 52.6.2 A School Assessment Board may, with the agreement of their external examiner, propose an alternative scaling algorithm to the Academic Registrar or their nominee for approval. Any such alternatives must satisfy the principles set out in [section 52.4](#) above.