Code of Practice for Assessment and Academic-related Matters 2024-25

YORK ST JOHN UNIVERSITY Est. 1841

Section 45 Scaling of marks policy

45.1 Purpose

45.1.1 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.

45.2 Definition

45.2.1 **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.

45.3 Scope

45.3.1 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).

45.3.2 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.

45.4 Principles

45.4.1 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.

45.4.2 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.

45.4.3 Scaling should only occur after marking and moderation processes are complete as set out in section 30 'Marking and Moderation Policy'.

45.4.4 Scaling should be applied fairly to all marks awarded to students who attempted the assessment, not just a subset (e.g., students who have not achieved a pass mark). It should not be applied to assessment awarded a zero for non-submission.

45.4.5 The process of scaling must not normally result in any mark being lower after adjustment than it was before the adjustment was applied.

45.4.6 Application of a scaling algorithm must not result in any module or assessment component mark which is greater than 100.

45.4.7 The rank order of students after scaling must be the same as the rank order of students before scaling.

45.4.8 Authority to apply scaling lies with the School Assessment Board under the delegated authority of the University Assessment Board and Academic Board. The basis for applying scaling and the algorithm used must be clearly recorded.

45.5 Process

45.5.1 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.

45.5.2 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.

45.5.3 The range within which the mean should not be lower than is 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.

45.5.4 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.

45.5.5 After investigation of any module with a mean mark outside the expected range derived from section 45.1.1, the marks can be either:

   a) **Confirmed**, if the marks awarded are deemed a fair and accurate reflection of student performance on the module, compared 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.

45.5.6 If applied, scaling should take place using one of algorithms described in section 45.6.1 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.

45.5.7 The scaled marks are recommended by the SAP to the School Assessment Board (SAB) for approval. The senior Registry representative oversees the mark scaling approval at the meeting.

The approved scaled marks are used for determining progression or award decisions. The School Assessment Board must complete a single 'SAB Special Resolution' form to report to University Assessment Board all the modules/assessments that were scaled at the Board. Separate forms are not required for every module/assessment. The SAB Chair will include details of the scaling, giving details of the justification, in the SAB Chair's report.

45.6 Scaling algorithm

45.6.1 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, if 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, if no scaled mark is greater than 100.