

Education Committee

Working Party: Review of Assessment Methods

Report and Initial Observations

Author	Professor Peter J. Dean, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)
Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Draft <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Final

DOCUMENT MODIFICATION HISTORY

Version no.	Primary author(s)	Description of version	Date complete	Provided to
1.0	Peter J. Dean, PVC (Education)	Final draft	29/05/2018	Education Committee
2.0		Revised	5/06/2018	Academic Board

DOCUMENT APPROVAL

Approved by	Signature	Date
Peter J. Dean, PVC (Education)		

Contents

- Introduction 2
- I. Terms of Reference and Initial Findings3
 - 1. Terms of Reference.....3
 - 2. The Working Party3
 - 3. Initial Outcomes3
 - 4. Working Party Future Issues 4
- II. Criterion Referenced Assessments: Legislation, Principles and UWA Policy5
 - 1. Government Frameworks/Regulation5
 - 2. UWA Assessment Policy 15/5 – Extracts and Principles 6
- Appendix A – Group of 8+ Benchmark.....1
- Appendix B – Exploration of Current Practice at UWA.....1
 - Initial Observations1
 - Definitions Used1

Introduction

The University Policy on Assessment (UP 15/5) has undergone an extensive phase of consultation and revision in the period up to October 2015. Thereafter an implementation plan was introduced in December 2015 in two phases. Phase 1 effective from 1 January 2016 and Phase 2 effective from 1 January 2018. In enacting both phase 1 and phase 2 revisions and adjustments to the policy have been made. It is recognised that through this process of consultation and revision the UP 15/5 has made significant steps forward in improving the standards and clarity of assessment at UWA.

With the implementation phase for UP 15/5 complete, it is appropriate for the Education Committee to review the UP 15/5 in relation to both the outcomes of the implementation plan and the policy's consistency with Commonwealth Legislation provided through the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). This is consistent with the scope of responsibilities of the University Education Committee and the UP 15/5, which outlines that the "University ensures that assessment processes and practice...are regularly evaluated".

This Working Party of the Education Committee was established (as per the terms of reference [ToR] below) to assess the relationship between the legislative requirements for criterion referenced assessment, the UP 15/5 and the practice of assessment at UWA. In undertaking this task the Working Party's mission, in accordance with the ToR, is to conduct an audit of practice relative to the UP 15/5 and the legislative requirements for criterion referenced assessment, to recommend any adjustments to policy to ensure consistency of compliance and to advise on mechanisms to support improvements in assessment practice to ensure consistency with the legislative requirements.

I. Terms of Reference and Initial Findings

1. Terms of Reference

Assessment of student learning is an important educational function of the University with teaching practices designed to engage, challenge and transform students throughout their courses.

The University Policy on Assessment mandates a student-centred approach to assessment to facilitate learning and to assess achievement against intended and explicit learning outcomes. The learning outcomes of each unit within a unit set of a course are in turn mapped to deliver the course learning outcomes/objectives.

Assessment is therefore criterion referenced – describing the student in terms of the developed knowledge and skills demonstrated as assurance of achievement of learning outcomes, not by comparison with the performance of fellow students. The assessment criteria are clear and explicit and are included in the unit outline so that students know what is expected of them for each assessment task. Assessment tasks cater for both individual and group diversity and are used for both formative and summative purposes.

The purpose of the Working Party established by the University's Education Committee is to review assessment practices, in particular with regard to assessment methods employed across the University. The terms of reference of the proposed Working Party are:

- a) to review assessment practices with a view to ensuring that:
 - i. assessments are clearly linked to the intended learning outcomes;
 - ii. criterion-referenced assessments are implemented consistently, accurately and rigorously across the University; and
- b) to develop an appropriate mix of assessment types that are linked to the intended learning outcomes.

2. The Working Party

The Working Party met in April and May 2018 to consider the ToR, to provide a plan for actions, and to outline UWA assessment practices in the Faculties and Schools in relation to the regulatory framework and the UP 15/5. The information below sets out the regulatory framework and the provisions of the current UP 15/5 that were considered by the Working Party. The attachments to this paper provide an overview of the work completed so far and benchmarking for criterion-referenced assessment across the Go8+.

3. Initial Outcomes

On consideration of the evidence and material outlines below the Working Party assessed that

- A. The current UP 15/5 is inconsistent and contradictory in its application of the criterion referenced approach to assessment both in relation to the regulatory framework and internally within the policy.
- B. As a result of A. the application of a criterion referenced approach to assessment at UWA is very broad and lacks consistency (see Appendix B). This has created some confusion for both staff and especially students. It was noted that it was very possible for an undergraduate UWA student to have a full time study load in a semester with units across all four faculties and have four completely different sets of assessment process and standards being applied; from a consistent criterion referenced approach to assessment through to a normative (scaled) method and positions in between.
- C. As a result of finding A virtually all practices in relation to assessment, including norm referencing, are currently permissible within the provisions of the UP 15/5 but many are inconsistent with the criterion referencing approach as set out in the policy and in relation to the regulatory framework.

- D. There is a lack of clarity over a number of key terms especially “moderation” and “standardisation” as well as the practice of “Adjustment of Marks” This is leading to a range of difference practice in assessment at UWA depending on the interpretation of these terms.
- E. There is a wide variety of practices, and thus inconsistency as to the role, function and delegation of the Board of Examiners across the University.

The Working Party has unanimously agreed to make the following observations in its initial findings:

1. That the UP 15/5 be revised to make consistent the provisions of the policy with the regulatory framework and a criterion based approach to assessment. In particular it was noted that Section 11 of the UP 15/5 lacks clarity and provides the greatest area of inconsistency in the policy. This section is, in part, a key reason for contradiction to the policies commitment to criterion-references assessment.
2. That in clarifying UP 15/5 that UWA adopt language consistent with our Go8 counterparts as represented by best-practice by UQ: “Assessment is criterion-referenced: Judgements about the quality of students’ performance are made by reference to explicit or predetermined criteria and standards and not by reference to the achievement of other students” and USYD: “Assessment incorporates rigorous academic standards related to the discipline(s) and is based on pre-determined, clearly articulated criteria with which students actively engage...assessment will be evaluated solely on the basis of students’ achievement against criteria and standards specified to align with learning outcomes.”
3. Clarity be provided as to the meaning of terms “moderation” and “standardisation” and this, as well as the adjustment of marks, be supported by a UWA Procedure for such practices. In addition, the Education Enhancement Unit provide examples of best practice and a professional development program that is in line with a consistent interpretation of these terms under a criterion-based assessment approach.
4. That the Assessment Working Party continue to work on the issue of the Board of Examiners with consideration to the development of procedure that provides for a more consistent University approach.

4. Working Party Future Issues

The Assessment Working Part has identified a range of issues around assessment practice to investigate and report on including:

- Board of Examiners practices
- Use of the marking range and marking means across degrees and disciplines of the University
- Assessment mapping at the major and course level;
- The range of assessment types across courses and majors;
- The progression of assessment between levels 1, 2 and 3 and between cycle 1 and cycle 2;
- Academic integrity and special consideration (after the external audit report is provided)
- Word count, late penalties and assessments in study break
- Volume of assessment

II. Criterion Referenced Assessments: Legislation, Principles and UWA Policy

1. Government Frameworks/Regulation

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015

1.4 *Learning Outcomes and Assessment*

1. The expected learning outcomes for each course of study are specified, consistent with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded, and informed by national and international comparators.
2. The specified learning outcomes for each course of study encompass discipline-related and generic outcomes, including:
 - a) specific knowledge and skills and their application that characterise the field(s) of education or disciplines involved
 - b) generic skills and their application in the context of the field(s) of education or disciplines involved
 - c) knowledge and skills required for employment and further study related to the course of study, including those required to be eligible to seek registration to practise where applicable, and
 - d) skills in independent and critical thinking suitable for life-long learning.
3. Methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, are capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.
4. On completion of a course of study, students have demonstrated the learning outcomes specified for the course of study, whether assessed at unit level, course level, or in combination.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), 2nd Edition January 2013

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework. The AQF provides the standards for Australian qualifications.

Authority to issue the qualification

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Assessment: Assessment is a process to determine a student's achievement of expected learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration

2. UWA Assessment Policy 15/5 – Extracts and Principles

Definitions

assessment criteria specify how markers evaluate students' knowledge, understanding and capabilities, and are based on intended learning outcomes

criterion-referenced assessment is designed to provide a measure of students' performance that is directly relevant to the learning outcomes. This approach to assessment provides an indication of the specific knowledge and skills each student can demonstrate through an assessment task (e.g. students will be able to create an argument including a claim, data, warrant, backing and qualifier). This approach is consistent with the Australian [Higher Education Standards Framework](#) (Threshold Statements) 2015 that require the learning outcomes for each course of study to be specified (Standard 1.4.1) and that any grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment (Standard 1.4.3)

1 Assessment standards:

1.1 The University is committed to assessment that is fair, integral, valid and efficient. Assessment is:

- c) Valid if it:
 - i. evaluates student learning outcomes;
 - ii. is criterion-referenced;

2 General principles

2.1 The University ensures that assessment processes and practices:

- a) are consistent and maintain high standards;
- b) report performance against the intended learning outcomes; and
- c) are regularly evaluated (with feedback from staff, students and others).

9 Minimum unit assessment requirements

9.2.3 Assessment criteria and marking schemes

- a) In accordance with the Higher Education Standards, each unit adopts a criterion-referenced method of assessment.
- b) Each assessment item has assessment criteria aligned with the learning outcomes that provide the basis for evaluating and differentiating the quality of a student's work.
- c) Assessment criteria are aligned with the University grades and grade descriptors (see part 5 (Grading System) which provides the University grades, grade codes and corresponding marks and descriptors).
- d) Each assessment item must publish a marking scheme for assigning marks that is used consistently by all members of a teaching team, across all campuses and all modes of teaching. The marking scheme is published either before or at the time the assessment task is made available to students.

Appendix A – Group of 8+ Benchmark

Uni	Policy	Source	Approach
	<p>“Assessment linked to the learning outcomes ensures that students will be able to demonstrate the Monash Graduate Attributes.”</p> <p>“Criterion-referenced – clear criteria against which students’ work will be assessed must be provided in the interests of parity across assessors, groups or campuses.”</p> <p>“Explicit and transparent – the requirements of assessment tasks and the means by which students’ work will be judged and overall grades determined must be clear to students and all staff involved in teaching.”</p>	<p>Assessment in Coursework Units Policy</p>	<p>Criterion referenced</p>
ANU	<p>“Student performance is assessed against defined assessment criteria published in the course outline for each assessment task. The overall judgement is expressed as a grade and or a mark, as outlined in Table 1.”</p> <p>“The assessment tasks and the judgements made of student learning in a course are reviewed before the final mark or grade is approved to ensure that the judgements of student performance are appropriate, consistent, transparent, reliable and valid.”</p>	<p>Policy: Student assessment (coursework)</p>	<p>Criterion referenced</p>

	<p>“Colleges monitor, review and report on the outcomes of the assessment of student learning in all undergraduate and graduate coursework courses and maintain, monitor and act on trend data and ensure that activities reflect national and international disciplinary and interdisciplinary standards, as well as qualification type learning outcomes.</p>		
University of Adelaide	<p>“Marks for all pieces of assessment and the overall grade for a course are decided by reference to pre-determined criteria and standards linked to the specified course learning outcomes.”</p> <p>“Ensure an individual student's marks are determined by reference to their performance against pre-determined criteria and standards linked to the specified course learning outcomes and not by ranking against the performance of the student cohort in the course.”</p>	<p>Assessment for Coursework Programs Policy</p>	Criterion referenced
University of Melbourne	<p>““criterion-referenced assessment” means students’ work is assessed with reference to written criteria derived from explicit learning outcomes.”</p> <p>“Assessment and grading in subjects must be criterion-referenced and aligned to specific subject learning outcomes, including the graduate attributes and the generic skills they encompass.”</p> <p>“The BoE must ensure that:</p> <p>(a) clear assessment criteria are published with the details of each assessment task in the subject outline; and</p> <p>(b) assessment standards are explicit, and provide an explanation or example of the qualities of work required to achieve particular grades. Explanations of assessment criteria are:</p>	<p>Assessment and Results Policy</p>	Criterion referenced

i. specific to each task;

ii. clearly worded in plain English;

iii. sufficiently detailed so as to provide guidance to students undertaking assessment tasks, but not so detailed as to make the task meaningless (i.e. by providing 'the answer');

iv. justifiable (i.e. linked to the learning objectives of the subject);

v. except for pass/fail subjects, structured to enable differentiation between levels of performance;

vi. appropriate to assessment weightings (i.e. of sufficient detail given the relative importance of the task); and

vii. supported by a verbal or written statement about what constitutes the various levels of performance (e.g. what constitutes 'outstanding' versus 'adequate' level work and examples of each where practical)"

"The BoE must ensure that agreed documented assessment marking criteria are used to set standards which:

(a) ensure alignment between learning outcomes and assessment;

(b) ensure, as far as practicable, that every examiner and assistant marker in the subject applies the same marking standard to demonstrate equity of marking; and

(c) reduce the number of differences in marking during moderation of results.

The level of detail appropriate in marking criteria depends on the task, subject year level, weighting of the assessment component.

Marking criteria must align with the explanation of assessment criteria provided to students.

The BoE must ensure that all staff marking assessment tasks apply the approved marking criteria to assist in fair and equitable treatment of students."

University of Queensland	<p>“Criterion – a property or characteristic by which the quality of something may be judged”</p>	<p>Assessment - Policy</p>	Criterion referenced
	<p>“Assessment is criterion-referenced: Judgements about the quality of students’ performance are made by reference to explicit or predetermined criteria and standards and not by reference to the achievement of other students.”</p>		
University of Sydney	<p>“Criteria means statements that identify the key characteristics or qualities of student performance in an assessment task.”</p>	<p>Coursework Policy 2014 (Current)</p>	Criterion referenced
	<p>“Principle 3 - Assessment practices must be valid and fair This principle requires that: (2) Assessment incorporates rigorous academic standards related to the discipline(s) and is based on pre-determined, clearly articulated criteria with which students actively engage. (3) Students’ assessment will be evaluated solely on the basis of students’ achievement against criteria and standards specified to align with learning outcomes.”</p>		
	<p>“In the interests of transparency of grading the University uses a standards-based approach to assessing the achievements of students. (a) In this approach, grades are allocated using pre-determined standards. Students’ grades are not determined in relation to predetermined distributions.”</p>	<p>Assessment Procedures 2011</p>	
UNSW	<p>Assessment criteria for an assessment task will explicitly describe what students are expected to demonstrate in the task and should be aligned to the course, stream and/or program learning outcome(s).</p>	<p>Assessment Policy</p>	Criterion referenced

	<p>Students' marks and/or grades will be determined in relation to the expected standards of performance. Marks and/or grades will not be determined primarily in relation to the performance of other students, nor to a predetermined distribution of grades.</p>		
Curtin	<p>“Curtin aims to provide excellent assessment, teaching and learning opportunities within a criterion referenced framework where learning outcomes clearly indicate what successful students know and can do as a result of their learning experiences.”</p>	<p>Assessment and Student Progression Manual: Consolidated Policies and Procedures (October 2015)</p>	<p>Criterion referenced</p>
	<p>“Principle 2: Assessment aligns with intended learning outcomes Assessment will be made on the basis of performance defined by pre-specified criteria, rather than norm referenced approaches where assessment is made on the basis of performance relative to that of other members of the class or cohort. (In criterion referenced assessment, practices such as scaling marks and grading students to fit a normal distribution curve are not appropriate.)”</p>		

Appendix B – Exploration of Current Practice at UWA

Initial Observations

	Moderation/standardisation	Adjustment/Scaling
Faculty or discipline	9 Schools/disciplines stated yes (10 Schools/disciplines unclear)	12 Schools/disciplines stated yes (2 Schools/disciplines unclear, 5 stated no)

Please note:

*Information provided referred to the practice of one discipline within one of the two Schools

** Information was provided at Faculty level

A number of observations for discussion can be made of the information provided:

1. Approaches and practices to marking and assessment vary significantly, within and between Faculties
2. There is a lack of consensus around the definitions of moderation, standardisation, adjustment, and scaling
3. Board of Examiners practices are varied, taking place at different levels, with varying degrees of formality

Definitions Used

The tables used in this report sort current assessment practices as reported by Faculties into two categories –practices relating to:

1. Moderation and/or standardisation
2. Scaling and/or adjustment

Information returned by Faculties highlighted a lack of consensus around definitions for these practices. The following definitions have been used in the tables below.

Moderation

Defined in the University Policy on Assessment (the Policy) as “a process to ensure consistent, fair and reliable marking against academic standards” (definitions section). It is “employed to ensure appropriate and consistent marking standards within units, and that assessment outcomes are fair and reliable” (s11.3.1). Examples of moderation practices are provided in s11.3.2 and include standardisation exercises, double blind marking, double open marking, and second marking.

Standardisation

Defined in the Policy but used interchangeably with “moderation” in places. Section 11.3.3 states “Standardisation/moderation of marking, using appropriate marking scheme, applies to all units”. Standardisation exercises – “where a group of assessors independently mark sample pieces of work, then compare and discuss the marks to establish consistent marking standards” - are one stated example of appropriate moderation technique. The category used below also captures practices designed to determine commonly accepted marking standards between units, schools, faculties, or institutions.

Adjustment

Permitted reasons, times, and methods for the adjustment of marks are listed in the Policy (s11.4). Marks may be adjusted to ensure a) the quality of marking across a group of students is consistent, b) the grades awarded are a valid indicator of the achievement of a cohort, or that c) unforeseen circumstances that arise during the assessment period or in the assessment regime are rectified. Adjustment may be used when a) a cohort from one tutorial group has a considerably different average mark from the cohorts in other tutorial groups due to marking inconsistencies, b) the average mark for the cohort differs considerably from their performance in other assessments in the same subject, c) a single examination question, problem or assessment task proves problematic, or d) unanticipated anomalies in the shape of mark distribution occur (e.g. marks are highly concentrated in a narrow band around the median).

Permitted methods include common increment adjustment (adding a fixed number of marks to all students), linear or base reduction method (multiplying raw scores by common fixed factor), or curving (ordering raw scores from highest to lowest and partitioning them into grade categories based on a pre-determined distribution). While the term **scaling** is not defined or explicitly used in the Policy, the last method of adjustment is referred to interchangeably with scaling.

School or discipline	Mod	Further information	Adjust	Further information
1	Unclear	Not stated	No	No standardised scaling is applied to marks (as this is not compatible with outcomes based assessment). Marks ending in 9 are discussed on a case by case basis.
2	Yes	Alternate markers used periodically, new assessments and items validated at division level, edge case fails discussed & sometimes second marked. Assessments monitored and adjusted year on year.	No	
3	Unclear	Not stated	Yes	There is an expected marks range for each unit level and marks are scaled where this is not achieved. Scaling occurs at UC level and potentially also by head of discipline or Discipline BoE. All marks ending in 9 are adjusted upwards by 1 mark.
4	Unclear	Not stated	No	<p>One discipline within this school is exempt from the Faculty Mark Adjustment Policy</p> <p>Remaining disciplines follow policy, which stipulates an expected mean, as below. Units which don't meet this mean and lack "a rigorous explanation for the deviation" will be adjusted to meet the standard.</p> <p>For units with enrolments of 50 or more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1: Unit average to be 62.5% +/- 2.5% (i.e. 60 to 65) • Levels 2 and 3: Unit average to be 67.5% +/- 2.5% (i.e. 65 to 70) • Levels 4 and 5: Unit average to be 70.0% +/- 5.0% (i.e. 65 to 75) <p>Units below 50 enrolments have wider tolerances.</p>

5	Unclear	Not stated	Yes	Marks ending in 9 are adjusted (but not always). When this occurs it is before the school level BoE. It is customary not to upload a mark of 49.
6	Yes	High/low/med papers group marked, distributions reviewed, fails checked by UC. High/low/med papers marked at start of marking to set standards.	Yes	Expected average provided to markers. Only assessment items are adjusted, not cohort or final grade - 11a) and c).
7	Unclear	All fail papers are check marked	Yes	Adheres to a School Scaling Policy. Core units in one postgraduate degree must fit a marks profile – min of 2% of students >85%, 5-10% students HD, 30-40% D/HD. Undergrad units must have no more than 50% D/HD. Marks are adjusted to fit distribution by modifying marks up or down. This occurs at UC level.
8	Unclear	Not stated	Unclear	Scaling and adjustment is not implemented as a policy, but “course coordinators review the mark distribution of all units to ensure the distribution matches the student cohort” and marks ending in 9 are sometimes adjusted up or down depending on the performance of the student.
9	Yes	Where more than one examiner marks a particular assessment task, marks are moderated to ensure consistent marking standards. Second marking is sometimes used	Yes	Teaching Intensive academics "do not moderate or scale" due to criterion referencing. Teaching & Research academics scale and adjust more. Some units increase marks "so the grades awarded are a valid indicator of the achievement of a cohort" using a common increment, or increase marks for exam questions to counter poor performance believing the question was too hard.
10	Yes	Standard setting via external benchmarking every 2-3 years. Moderation via double marking and pre-	Yes	Marks are only scaled when the cohort’s average mark significantly departs from the average marks reported in previous deliveries of the unit(s) (ie to correct abnormal group performance, s114.3)

		renewal process - review of blueprints, pre-examination reviews, post-examination item analyses, quality of assessment at year level, student feedback, and comparison across cohorts.		
11	Unclear	Not stated	Yes	Standard set (by school and accreditation board) determines pass mark, marks are then adjusted so that a pass again resembles 50%. Levels of achievement defined and turned into cut scores for pass marks - not 50%
12	Yes	Blind second marking. Sometimes double marking (mostly open).	Unclear	"Uses the University's practices on scaling and moderation." "We moderate the exams by 2 or more academic staff before submission. (marking standardisation exercises)"
13	Unclear	Not stated	Yes	All disciplines in this School follow the Faculty Mark Adjustment Policy, which stipulates an expected mean, as below. Units which don't meet this mean and lack "a rigorous explanation for the deviation" will be adjusted to meet the standard. For units with enrolments of 50 or more: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1: Unit average to be 62.5% +/- 2.5% (i.e. 60 to 65) • Levels 2 and 3: Unit average to be 67.5% +/- 2.5% (i.e. 65 to 70) • Levels 4 and 5: Unit average to be 70.0% +/- 5.0% (i.e. 65 to 75) Units below 50 enrolments have wider tolerances.
14	Yes	Occasionally employ 2 or more markers in some circumstances and efforts to avoid accidental bias are made. This is not yet formalised, and because of this the process may lack consistency. Presume that accrediting body sets	No	Does not employ scaling since circumstances in which it might be indicated do not arise.

		standards and as we are accredited we are in line with the standards.		
15	Unclear	Not stated	Yes	Scaling occurs rarely and when it has occurred was around 3-5% of the mark. A maximum of 50% D/HD for UG and 60% D/HD in PG units is maintained. There is an understanding of a 68% average in UG units.
16	Yes	“Moderation” is applied randomly. “Moderation” is applied routinely to highest and lowest marks.	Yes	Problematic questions have common increment adjusted for whole cohort. Double blind, second marking are applied randomly and in specific instances where anomalies in grades are identified.
17	Unclear	Not stated	No	Marks are absolutely not adjusted, including marks ending in 9. The students are given the mark they deserve on the basis of the marking criteria set.
18	Yes	Moderation occurs in units > 100 students. Coordinators and tutors have 1-to-1 training on grading and feedback. Negative marking/comments are reviewed and moderated by Unit coordinator	Yes	The school’s policy is that 49 marks are adjusted up to 50. Scaling does not occur.
19	Yes	Common practice to moderate between markers. Some schools provide formal training. Extensive data is used at School and Faculty level to monitor cohort performance and support standard setting.	Yes	Faculty policy is that 49 marks are adjusted up to 50. Over the past 4 BoE’s, 2-3 units have been adjusted where there is an evidence-based reason. Other than this, to the best knowledge of the Faculty, no scaling or adjustment takes place.

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HELD ON
TUESDAY 29 MAY 2018 IN THE SENATE ROOM**

8. REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT METHODS – Working Party Report on Initial Findings and Observations – REF F18/733

Members recalled that the Education Committee established a working party, led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), to review assessment methods across the University. Members considered an interim Working Party report that provided an overview of the progress to date and the following initial observations of its findings:

- i. That the University Policy on Assessment (UP15/5) be revised to make consistent the provisions of the policy with the regulatory framework and a criterion based approach to assessment. In particular it was noted that Section 11 of the UP 15/5 lacks clarity and provided the greatest area of inconsistency in the policy. This section has been, in part, a key reason for contradiction to the policies commitment to criterion-references assessment.
- ii. That in clarifying UP15/5 the University adopts language consistent with the Go8 counter-parts as represented by best-practice by the University of Queensland: “Assessment is criterion-referenced: Judgements about the quality of students’ performance are made by reference to explicit or predetermined criteria and standards and not by reference to the achievement of other students” and USYD: “Assessment incorporates rigorous academic standards related to the discipline(s) and is based on pre-determined, clearly articulated criteria with which students actively engage...assessment will be evaluated solely on the basis of students’ achievement against criteria and standards specified to align with learning outcomes.”
- iii. That clarity be provided with regard to the meaning of terms “moderation” and “standardisation” and this, as well as the adjustment of marks, be supported by a UWA Procedure for such practices. In addition, the Education Enhancement Unit be requested to provide examples of best practice and a professional development program that would be in line with a consistent interpretation of these terms under a criterion-based assessment approach.
- iv. That the Assessment Working Party continue to work on the issue of the Board of Examiners with consideration to the development of procedure that would provide for a more consistent University approach.

Noting that a full report and a revised policy would be presented for consideration by the Academic Board via the Education Committee, members

RESOLVED – 15

to endorse the initial findings and observations as set out in the Working Party Report, as attached to the agenda, and forward the report to the Academic Board for consultation and obtaining wider feedback.