

COURSEWORK MODERATION AND MARK ADJUSTMENTS

(AN EXPLANATION FOR CENTRES)

The GCSE, GCE, Principal Learning and Project Code of Practice states that awarding bodies must moderate the marks submitted by centres and make adjustments where necessary to bring each centre's judgements in line with the required standard. This is to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly by being judged against the same standard.

Tolerance

The marking process for centre-assessed units/components involves the use of judgement – both by the centre and the moderator. It is not reasonable to expect two individuals to make exactly the same judgement in all marking decisions. Some leeway must be allowed for these differences; we call this a tolerance.

Tolerance is a fixed number of marks, specific to each unit/component. The decision as to whether a centre's marks will be adjusted or not is based upon whether the differences between a centre's marks and the corresponding moderator's marks are 'within tolerance'.

Sampling

For all centre-assessed units/components, centres are required to provide a sample of work for moderation. First the moderator looks at part of the sample (a sub-sample), and if the moderator agrees with the centre's marks (within the specified tolerance) no further work is considered and no adjustments are made to the centre's marks.

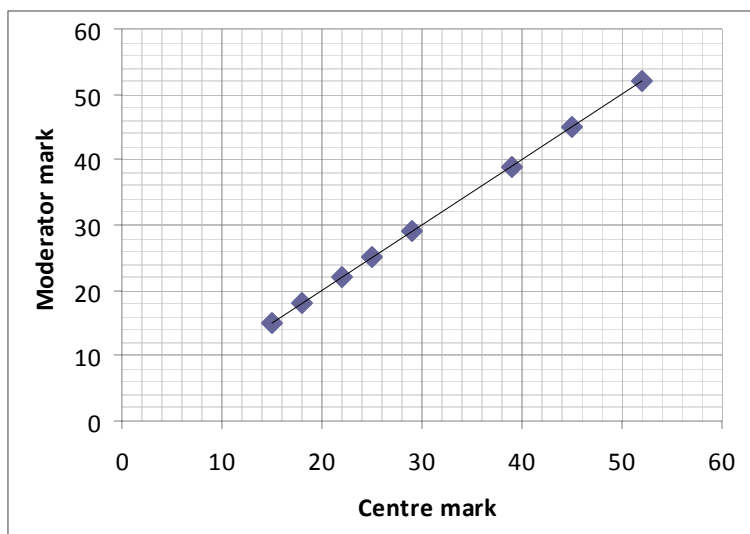
If, however, the moderator finds any of the marks in the sub-sample to be outside the agreed tolerance, they would then consider the rest of the work in the sample. After inspection of the full sample, adjustments may be made using the method described below.

Sampling is intended to determine whether a centre is marking candidates at the required standard. No individual candidate marks are changed on the basis of moderator sampling, instead the sample (or sub-sample) is used as a guide as to what (if any) adjustment needs to be applied to the centre as a whole. For this reason, it is vital that centres internally standardise, i.e. in centres with more than one teaching group markers must ensure that they are marking to an agreed standard within the centre.

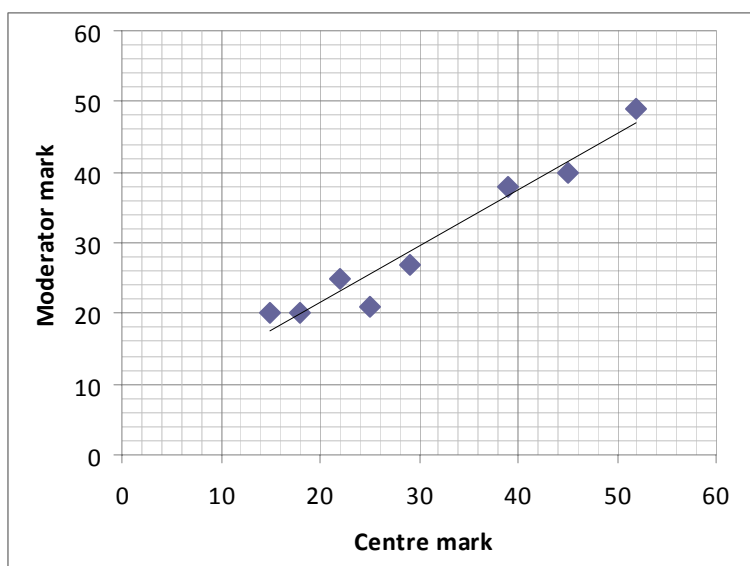
Calculating adjustments

When an adjustment is necessary, a mathematical process is used to calculate adjusted marks for all candidates in a given centre. The best way to understand the process is to view it on a graph, with centre marks plotted against moderator marks and each dot representing one candidate.

Graph 1 shows the ideal scenario; in which the moderator has agreed completely with the centre's marks.

Graph 1

The reality is more like Graph 2, where the points do not lie in a straight line, but there is a trend and a “line of best fit” can be drawn.

Graph 2

Once this line is calculated by the Edexcel computer, it is used to recommend the adjustment to the marks of candidates in a centre. Graph 3 illustrates the transformation of centre marks to adjusted marks using the line.

Graph 3

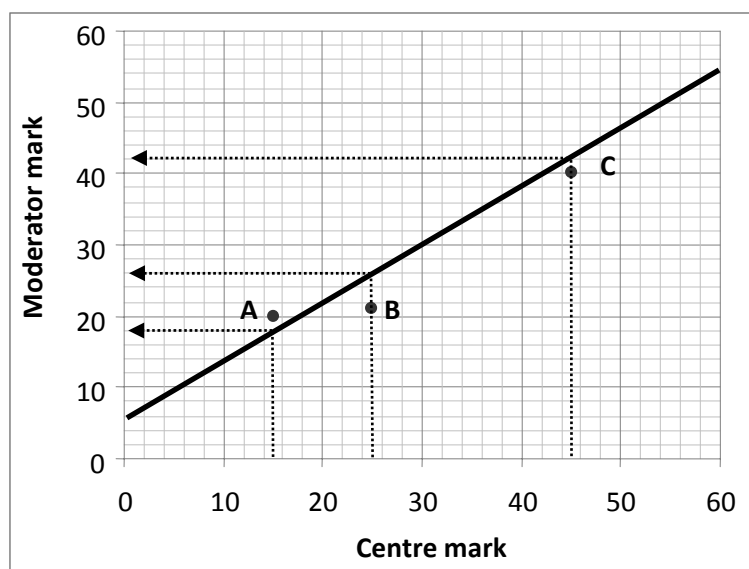


Table 1

Candidate	Centre mark	Moderator mark	Adjusted mark
A	15	20	18
B	25	21	26
C	45	40	42

The three candidates in table 1 are shown on Graph 3 above. The line can be used to find the adjusted mark for each candidate. Candidate A, for example, was given a mark of 15 by the centre, and would receive an adjusted mark of 18. Candidate B was given 25 marks by the centre and the adjusted mark would be 26. Candidate C was given 45 marks by the centre and the adjusted mark would be 42.

Applying adjustments to centres

As in the example above, moderators may give marks that are higher than the centre's marks for some candidates, and lower for others. The adjusted marks can fall within that range (i.e. between the centre's mark and the moderator's mark), as well as above it and below it. When looking at individual candidates some appear to 'benefit' from the adjustment (see candidate B in the example who was given a mark of 25 by the centre, 21 by the moderator, and 26 in the adjustment). Conversely, some candidates seem to 'lose out' and receive a mark lower than both the centre and moderator gave.

The intention of the process is to use the sampled moderator's marks to calculate an adjusted mark for all candidates at a centre (not just the sampled ones), and to ensure that a fair adjustment is made for the centre as a whole.

All adjusted marks are calculated based on the marks given by the centre, so the centre's rank order of candidates is maintained. This means the candidate(s) given the

highest mark by the centre and the candidate(s) given the lowest mark by the centre will continue to have the highest and lowest marks after the adjustment has been made.

Centres which fall into the category of requiring adjustment are reviewed at Edexcel. Sometimes the suggested adjustments are not accepted as there is significant disagreement between the moderator and the centre's rank ordering of the candidates and further work may be requested for moderation.

Summary

There are four possible outcomes of the moderation process

- (i) There is no difference between the between the centre's marks and the moderator's marks for the sampled candidates so **the centre's marks are accepted for all candidates**
- (ii) There are only small differences between the centre's marks and the moderator's marks for the sampled candidates (i.e. the differences are 'within tolerance') so **the centre's marks are accepted for all candidates**
- (iii) The differences are greater but the moderator generally agrees with the centre's rank ordering of the candidates so **the technique described above is used to adjust the marks of all candidates.**
- (iv) There is significant disagreement between the moderator and the centre's rank ordering of the candidates so further work is looked at before candidates' final marks are determined. In extreme cases this may lead to the moderator's marks being imposed for all candidates at the centre.

Remember: adjustments are only made when necessary to maintain equity between centres and candidates.