THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

REVISED STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES FOR THE
ANONYMOUS MARKING OF EXAMINATIONS (revised May 2003)

1. Principle

It is a requirement of Senate that there should be anonymity at the point of marking for all invigilated examinations and wherever practical and appropriate for non-invigilated examinations. This requirement is intended to prevent unconscious bias (either in favour of or against students) which might occur in the marking process.

2. Approved Exceptions

It is recognised that there are circumstances where the implementation of anonymous marking for particular forms of non-invigilated examination is either;

- not practical because the nature of the examination involves contact between the student and the examiner as part of the assessment,

or

- not appropriate because the process of conducting anonymous marking would diminish the formative value of the feedback derived from the assessment process.

With reference to these principles, the following specific circumstances have been identified as acceptable grounds for exception to the requirements for anonymous marking:

i. When the assessment takes the form of a practical demonstration, performed in the presence of the examiners, for example, an oral language examination, presentation, artistic performance clinical practice or laboratory work.

ii. When the assessment takes place over a period of time with support from a designated supervisor or tutor and familiarity with the content of the assessment, usually a topic identified by the individual student or group, makes anonymity difficult. This would apply mostly to dissertations, projects and portfolios.

iii. When the assessment takes place during the teaching of a module for formative purposes. This is for the reason that administration of anonymous marking in these circumstances is likely to prevent feedback from being provided in sufficient time to inform learning during the module.

Other circumstances may be identified by departments in accordance with the stated principles for exception. However, it is confirmed that neither the general administrative workload arising from anonymous marking or the preferences of
students will be given consideration as appropriate grounds for exception. Approval for further exceptions should be obtained from the Faculty and where agreed by the Faculty, should be brought to the attention of the Quality and Standards Committee who will continue to have a monitoring role.

Where anonymous marking is not implemented for non-invigilated, summative assessment departments should ensure that internal moderation is particularly rigorous to ensure that marking is accurate and consistent. Procedures for internal moderation should reflect the University’s Guidelines for the Internal Moderation of Examinations.

3. Administration of Anonymous Marking

As indicated above, departments are expected to operate effective administrative procedures for the management of anonymous marking to ensure that the process is conducted in a timely manner and with the minimum possible risk of error. All departments are expected to use students’ registration numbers as identification, rather than create alternative sets of examination numbers.

Good practice in this respect can be established through consultation with colleagues in other departments. However, the following are intended to provide examples of how the process is currently managed in several of the University’s larger departments:

i. School of Medicine

- Information linking students’ registration numbers to students’ names is retained by the School’s administrators only until the whole marking process is complete.

- The examination scripts to be marked by each examiner are sorted by numerical order of the student registration numbers by the School’s administrators. The scripts are then given to the examiner along with a mark sheet for completion listing the students’ registration numbers in the same numerical order.

- Mark sheets are returned the School’s administrators who will put them into the master spreadsheet which will identify students by both their names and registration numbers once all the marks are available for discussion by the examining board.

ii. Department of Law

- Students are asked to identify their work using their registration number upon submission.

- Examiners are provided with a disk which contains a list of the students’ registration numbers alongside which marks should be input.
• The disks containing the marks are returned to the department’s administrative staff to be downloaded into the master spreadsheet of marks, which will also identify students by name as well as registration number.

iii. School of English

• For non-invigilated examinations, students submit two copies of the script and complete two cover sheets. One cover sheet requires the student to include their name and registration number and the other just the registration number.

• A copy of the examination script is retained by the school’s administrative staff along with the cover sheet which holds both the name and registration number. The second copy is given to the examiner along with the cover sheet identifying the student by their registration number (this cover sheet also includes space for the examiner to provide feedback comments).

• Following marking, the examiner’s copy of the script with cover sheet is returned to the administrative staff and married up with the copy which has been retained with the cover sheet which includes both the name and registration number. Marks are then input into the master spreadsheet, which identifies students by both name and registration number.

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MAY 2003