

Guidance on Examining: Marking

Very soon after a student has completed their question paper (known as a script), the process of marking begins.

The vast majority of our marking is now done by examiners looking at scanned copies of scripts on a computer screen. OCR's marking is carried out by over 14,000 examiners, all of whom receive high quality training and monitoring. Our marking teams are made up of principal examiners, senior team leaders, team leaders and examiners. Here are our six steps to marking:

1 A few days after the exam, senior examiners for a paper – such as the principal examiner and the team leaders – come together to look at the completed scripts and make sure they are all marking to the same standard. These are 'Standardisation' meetings. The senior examiners all mark the same set of scripts at the meeting using the mark scheme which outlines the knowledge and skills students need to demonstrate to achieve a particular mark. This process ensures the senior team is marking fairly and consistently.

2 These scripts are then sent out to individual examiners for them to practise on to make sure they are marking in line with the senior team. Team leaders then review these and provide guidance and feedback to ensure all examiners are applying the mark scheme in the same way. The individual examiners then complete another set of scripts as a test to make sure that they have understood the standard and have taken all the feedback on board.

3 When an individual examiner has passed all the standardisation checks, they can now begin downloading their batches of scanned scripts to mark on screen.

4 Checks don't stop there though. As our examiners mark, more pre-marked scripts are interspersed with real ones to check the accuracy of each marker. The introduction of marking on computers has allowed team leaders to be alerted to any change in standards from markers.

5 It's not just examiners who are checked; team leaders and principal examiners are also subject to checks. If any examiner is found to be applying the mark scheme inappropriately and marking inaccurately, they are asked to stop marking and their scripts are re-marked.

6 This approach to marking comes from our extensive research into the whole process, from selecting, training and marker standardisation to monitoring marker accuracy and identifying factors that may affect accuracy and reliability. Above all, we want our students to be confident that their scripts are being marked fairly and consistently.