

## A guide to marking

Examiners must have a well-founded and common understanding of the requirements of the mark scheme and apply it reliably and consistently. They need to be able to mark accurately, awarding the right mark to each candidate every time. Therefore it is essential that each examiner has a consistent approach in applying the mark scheme to candidates' work so that all the examiners marking an exam paper do so reliably. This information sheet gives guidance on how we achieve this.

### Marking accuracy

Marking accuracy is achieved through:

- clear mark schemes
- suitably qualified examiners
- thorough standardisation
- rigorous marking quality assurance processes
- clear, well-established, documented procedures.

### Mark schemes

Mark schemes are the instructional documents that show examiners how to mark a specific exam paper. They include the answers that examiners are looking for and they also specify how marks must be awarded when answers are only partly correct. They are carefully reviewed and revised for clarity and factual accuracy before an exam. They are only finalised once senior examiners have reviewed samples of candidates' work and checked that the full range of candidates' answers is covered.

### Examiners

Examiners are carefully selected and trained, and normally have a number of years' teaching experience in the subject. Where possible we reappoint examiners who are experienced in marking the same exam paper in a previous series and whose marking has been accurate.

Each examiner is assigned to a marking team under the supervision of a team leader, who is supervised in turn by the examination's principal examiner. The principal examiner is responsible for setting the standard of marking to be applied by all examiners.

### Standardisation

Examiners are 'standardised' (or trained) every exam series to make sure they all apply the mark scheme fairly and consistently. To achieve this, all examiners begin by marking the same set of exam

papers which have already been marked by the principal examiner and agreed with team leaders. Team leaders then carefully review examiners' marking and provide guidance and feedback to ensure examiners can apply the mark scheme accurately and consistently. If an examiner is not applying the mark scheme correctly they will receive further guidance and be asked to mark additional exam papers which will then be checked. Examiners are not allowed to start marking until they have shown a clear and accurate understanding of the mark scheme.

## Quality assurance

Marking accuracy is monitored in several ways by:

- team leaders reviewing a sample of each examiner's exam papers at various stages through the marking period
- principal examiners checking team leaders' marking and their supervision of the examiners.

If an examiner's marking is found to be inaccurate, action is taken in the following ways depending on the type of inaccuracy found.

- **Scaling:** we use scaling if we find that an examiner's marking is consistently a little lenient or a little severe. If the marking is severe, we give all the candidates marked by that examiner extra marks that do not appear on their exam paper. If the marking is lenient, we reduce the mark that appears on the candidate's exam paper. Our highest priority is to make sure that candidates get the right marks, regardless of who marks their work.
- **Re-marking of exam papers:** in cases where an examiner is inconsistent in their marking, the exam papers will be re-marked by examiners whose marking has been found to be accurate.

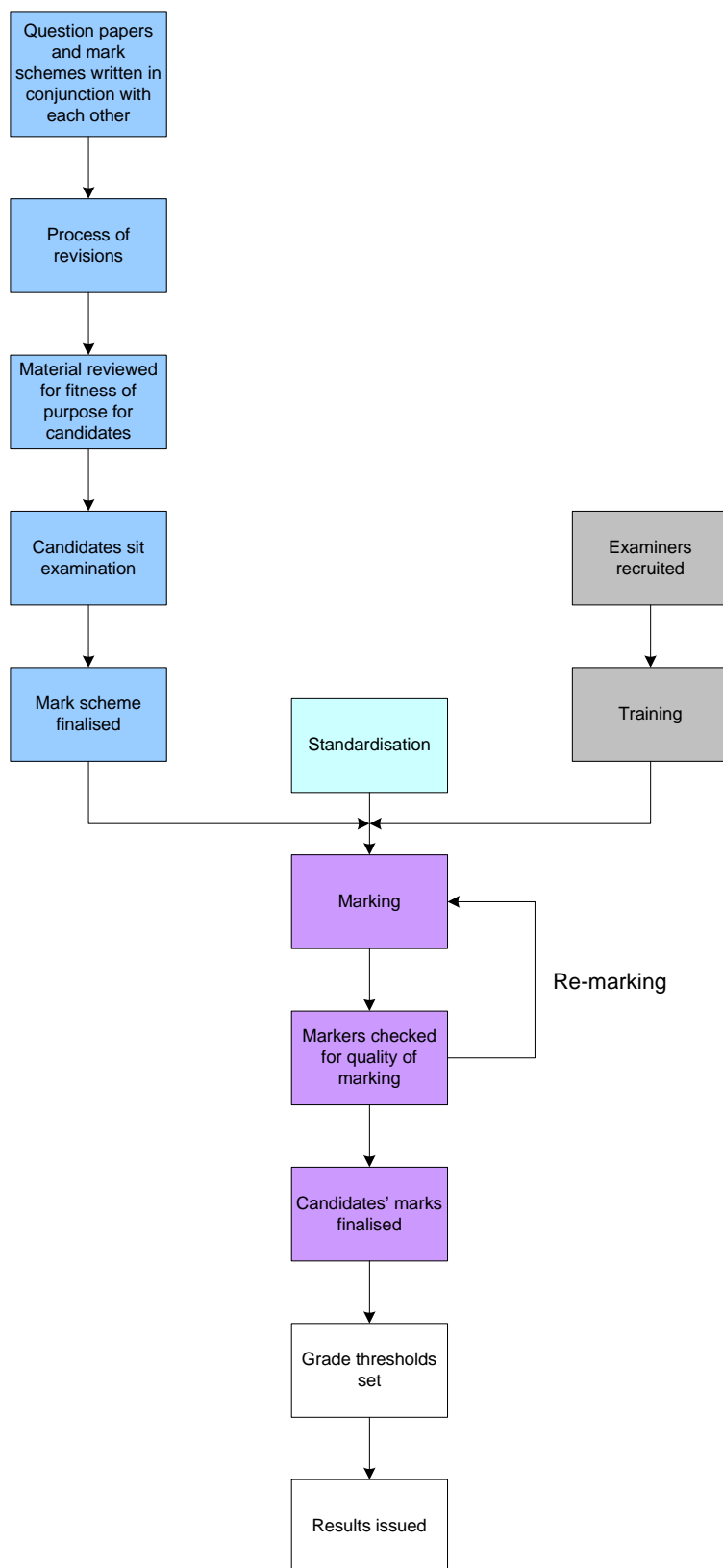
## Clear, documented procedures

We provide examiners with clear documentation to help them gain an understanding of our expectations and requirements. Documentation and processes are designed with the aim of achieving the correct mark for each candidate.

## Summary

- Examiners are required to go through a standardisation process in order that they have a full understanding of the mark scheme.
- Examiners have their marking checked throughout the process to ensure that they continue to meet the requirements of the mark scheme.
- Action is taken if an examiner's marking is found to be inaccurate.

## Process of marking



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