

UCT Online High School's Grading and Moderation System

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UCT Online High School has carefully designed an integrated model for grading the end-of-year examinations. In implementing this, we work in partnership with the independent and specialised provider of educational services, Teach Me 2 (TM2). All TM2 staff who participate in grading our internal examinations are teachers registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE) or teachers in training who meet the requirements to register with the SACE, which means having completed a B.Ed or PGCE and showing appropriate teaching experience. All UCT Online High School Faculty are fully trained teachers. Our approach meets the need of providing accurate and consistent grading at scale.

Our grading model comprises five phases, designed to ensure that UCT Online High School Faculty is overseeing and directing the grading process at all times and that every learner receives an accurate, consistent and fair evaluation of their work.

Phase One

In this first phase, samples comprising between 10% and 20% of the total submitted examination scripts are allocated to each UCT Online High School Faculty member to grade. On the basis of these samples of scripts, marking guides are reviewed and improved, notes are added to the guides and video guides are created for markers if these are required. When this initial phase has been completed, the remaining set of scripts is passed on to the TM2 team of qualified markers.

Phase Two

In this second phase, the TM2 team of qualified markers works from the detailed marking guides, notes and videos provided by the UCT Online High School Faculty, and grades the complete set of scripts. At any stage, TM2 markers can consult with UCT Online High School Faculty. This phase of our model is necessary

because of the scale of the grading required across UCT Online High School as a whole.

Phase Three

Initial moderation takes place in the third phase of the UCT Online High School grading model. There are three essential priorities in initial moderation, which is solely the responsibility of qualified UCT Online High School Faculty.

The first priority is to investigate any mark outliers for individual learners. This occurs when a proposed grade lies outside an individual learner's pattern of achievement through their school year as a whole. If this is flagged, the UCT Online High School Faculty member will pull up the script in question and ascertain whether the mark allocated conforms to the marking guides and is fair. If there is any doubt about this, the submission will be re-marked.

The second priority is to look into any mark outliers for components in the examination; in other words, the mark allocated for an individual learner in comparison with the achievement of the cohort as a whole for a specific element in the examination. Again, the UCT Online High School Faculty member will determine whether or not the outlier mark is accurate and fair.

The third priority is the requirement to validate every instance where a learner has been allocated a zero grade. Zero grades may be awarded because a learner's examination answer has no merit or did not upload a script to the UCT Online High School platform as required and within the required timeframe. Where moderation determines that a zero grade is unjustified, or has been given in error, the script is sent back for remarking with additional feedback to the marker.

Phase Four

The fourth phase provides post-moderation for our examinations, a standard process in education that is used to review the fairness of an assessment event as well as the quality of grading. In this process, UCT Online High School Faculty members are allocated batches of scripts that have been graded, and moderated, in Phase 3 of the process. Faculty evaluate the quality of the examination as a whole against a prescribed protocol. Where they identify discrepancies, they make detailed recommendations for adjusting the overall grading of the examination. Once UCT Online High School Faculty have completed their tasks in

this phase, an analysis of the overall fairness of the assessment and quality of grading is completed.

In Phases three and four, where large discrepancies are identified, an additional bundle of scripts- related to that particular marker- are selected for review. Where a marker is identified as having an unreliable trend in marking relevant sanctions, such as warnings or deactivation, are applied and the scripts are allocated for regrading.

Phase Five

The fifth and final phase of our grading process provides learners and guardians with the opportunity to appeal a final outcome of a learner's result, once the internal post-moderation process has been completed. Our Appeals Policy specifies that "learners and guardians may appeal an academic decision if they believe that the decision was unfair or that the academic policies were not followed or applied incorrectly. All parties involved in the appeal have a right to a meaningful opportunity to be heard and to respond to information and documentation presented". Specifically, in order to appeal a progression or retention decision, the guardian must "submit a written request by the first day of the school year, specifying the reasons why the progression or retention decision is being contested". The basis for appeals includes the physical or emotional health of a learner during the assessment event, barriers to learning and specific aspects of the end-of-year examination process.