Marking instructions for alternative assessments

These instructions are for marking an alternative assessment for an MTH module in the "24-hour exam" format (which means modules at levels 5–7, bar a few special exceptions which are being assessed differently).

We need to mark and check these exams to the same standards as for our usual exams, and we need to provide suitable evidence of our marking: student appeals are more common than ever, and may well become more so for these unusual assessments. When a student appeals against a result, we need to provide a "marking trail" to show that we've marked properly. As usual, this includes giving a mark for every attempted part of every attempted question (even if its an obvious zero), and providing evidence that we've looked at every page to see whether there are marks to be awarded.

We do not expect it to be an option to print all the submissions and mark them with red pen in the usual way: we do not know to what extent we will be able to be on campus, it will be difficult to pass marked scripts to checkers, and the cost of printing (in paper and in staff time) would be high.

So we need to mark submissions on-screen, recording numerical marks in a spreadsheet and annotating the submissions using appropriate software. QMplus itself provides an interface for annotation (and the annotated submissions will then be stored in QMplus) but if you prefer you can download all the submissions and annotate them using your preferred annotation software.

Getting hold of the submissions

The assignments will be set up to allow PDF submissions only. Students will be able to submit a single PDF file containing their handwritten pages, and will be instructed to put their student number on each page.

Once the deadline for the assignment has passed, you'll be able to retrieve them. Go to the assignment on the QMplus page, and you'll see some summary data of how many students have submitted. You will see two buttons "View all submissions" and "Grade".

View all submissions If you select this, you'll see an item "Grading action" and next to it a drop-down including the option "Download all submissions". This will then give you a zip file containing all the submissions which you can save to your computer, and then annotate with your favourite PDF annotation software.
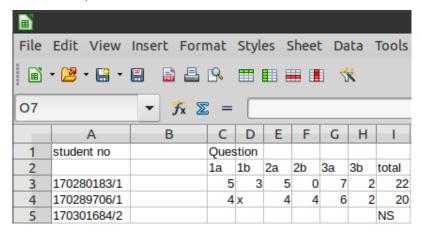
Grade Selecting this will take you to an interface where each student's submission is displayed directly on screen, and you can look through it and annotate it. The annotation interface is not bad (although there is better annotation software which you might prefer). You can add comments, ticks or crosses or red marks. Annotations can be removed, so don't worry that you're obliterating a student's work by putting an annotation on it.

The interface shows one student's work at a time, and by default goes through each student in turn, including those who haven't submitted anything. But near to the top right is an icon that looks a bit like a funnel that you can use to filter so that only students who have submitted something are shown. You can make annotations on the submission and save them. On the right-hand side of the screen are options for putting grades and feedback – don't use these, as we don't want to put grades for these assessments in QMplus or give students feedback at this stage.

Marking spreadsheet

The SEB chairs will send out simple spreadsheets for each module as usual, containing student numbers of all candidates. You should put these student numbers in a more detailed

spreadsheet, with a column for each question-part where you put the mark for each student on that question-part: record a "x" if the student did not attempt a question-part, or a 0 if they made a worthless attempt. You should then use the spreadsheet to add up the marks for each candidate. For example, your spreadsheet might start like this (where the third student shown did not submit):

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
			Question						
1	student no		1a	1b	2a	2b	3a	3b	total
2									
3	170280183/1		5	3	5	0	7	2	22
4	170289706/1		4	x	4	4	6	2	20
5	170301684/2								NS

If you are not confident enough with spreadsheets to set this up, please ask Matt for help.

Additional marking comments

When marking we often add comments such as "benefit of the doubt", "follow-through", "continued from earlier" etc. You can add these comments like this as annotations to the PDF (there's no need to add the actual numerical marks as annotations – putting them in the spreadsheet is good enough, as long as you observe the distinction between 0 and x). You also have to indicate that every page of the submission has been looked at – you can do this by adding a comment "seen" or just a red mark on any page which is not otherwise annotated. For cases where an answer to a question-part is fragmented, you should add something to show that you've taken all fragments into account.

If annotating PDFs is likely to be a problem for you, then we can find a way for you to record your marking on your spreadsheet; please consult the relevant SEB chair.

Alternatively, you may have a more sophisticated approach in mind than that described above; if so, please discuss it with the SEB chair.

Anonymity

We will be using the "Blind marking" setting for the assignments, which means that student names and numbers will not appear either in the filenames of downloaded submissions, or on the grading interface. The students are supposed to write their student number in their work, so we can record their marks against their student number as usual. If the student forgets to put their student number, then we can track it down: QMplus will allow you to de-anonymise the submissions, but please don't do this until you've finished marking.

Checking

The checker should look through the marking as usual to make sure that you have done everything properly. If you have annotated the submissions on QMplus, you may need to give your checker appropriate permissions on QMplus to be able to see them – consult the QMplus gurus for help with this. If you have made the annotations on PDFs saved on your computer, you will need to send them to your checker in a suitably secure fashion.

There is no need for the checker to add further annotations to the PDFs. But they should add evidence of their checking to the spreadsheet. I suggest having a column where they can just put a "yes" for each student where the marking looks OK, or add a note to indicate that something looks wrong, such as "Q2a answered but given x" or "no annotation on p4" or "Q3c answered in two places; both seen?".

Moderation

Moderation is a process for marking which is not often used in SMS: a colleague (the "moderator", who may be the same person as the checker) looks in detail at a sample of scripts (either 10 scripts or 10% of the scripts, whichever is higher) and advises on whether the marking is appropriate, or too harsh or too lenient. The marks for all scripts can then be adjusted based on this recommendation.

For the alternative assessments being used this year the college has stipulated that all marking done by new members of staff must be moderated. SEB chairs will be in touch with these staff to assign moderators and discuss details.