

Marks on scripts and portfolios of evidence

This factsheet will help you to understand the marks and annotations you will see on your candidate's script, and the marks on a portfolio of evidence. It will also help you to understand the reasons why a candidate's mark may or may not be changed following an enquiry about results.

What is a script or a portfolio of evidence and how is it marked?

A script is the copy of a candidate's answers submitted in an exam. When we mark your candidates' scripts, we allocate each script to a particular marker – the examiner. In most cases, a candidate must take more than one paper in the same subject. These various papers are allocated to different examiners who are experts in their field. Each examiner must mark each script according to the mark scheme for that paper. Senior examiners check the marking of every examiner to make sure that their marking is consistent across all scripts and in line with the mark scheme.

For candidates who were moved to the portfolio of evidence because exams could not take place, their pieces of evidence are submitted as one portfolio. A particular examiner marks all the evidence in a candidate's portfolio. For AS and A Level syllabuses that allow staged assessment, there are two portfolios – one for the AS Level and one for the 'A2' part. One examiner marks the AS Level portfolio, and another examiner marks the 'A2'. As with the exam route, senior examiners check the marking of every examiner to make sure that their marking is consistent across all portfolios and in line with the agreed standard.

What will I see on a candidate's script or portfolio of evidence?

Scripts marked on-screen and portfolio of evidence

The first page of the candidate's script will be a Candidate Marks Report. This report lists the candidate's marks at each stage of the marking process and shows you the mark given by the reviewing examiner at the enquiry about results stage. This may **not** be the final mark awarded to the script. This is explained in the section *Why does the mark on the front of the script or portfolio of evidence not match the final mark?*

Portfolios of evidence are marked on-screen, and the same applies – you will see the Candidate Marks Report which lists the candidate's marks for each piece of evidence in the portfolio. The total may **not** be the final mark awarded to the portfolio. This is explained in the section *Why does the mark on the front of the script or portfolio of evidence not match the final mark?*

Scripts marked on paper

The first page of the candidate's script will list their marks and will show the marks given to the script by each examiner who has marked it.

Different examiners' marks will be written in different colours. You can find out more information about this in the section *Use of colour in annotation*.

What are the marks shown on the front of the script or portfolio of evidence?

The different marks awarded to a script during the different marking stages are shown on the front of the script. For scripts marked on-screen, and for portfolio of evidence, each column on the Candidate Marks Report shows a marking stage described as 'Mark type'.

All marking, in all marking stages, is done according to the marking standard set by the Principal Examiner, the most senior examiner marking the paper. The Principal Examiner is the person responsible for making sure that the mark scheme is applied correctly or that the marking approach for portfolio of evidence is followed correctly.

What are the stages of marking a script or portfolio of evidence?

Original marking (all candidates)

This is the mark that the original examiner gave to the candidate's work on the script, or for their portfolio of evidence.

Examiner monitoring (if applicable)

This is the mark that a senior examiner gave to the script or portfolio of evidence if it was sampled for monitoring checks. Each examiner's original marking is checked by a senior examiner during the marking period. The senior examiner reviews a sample of the original examiner's scripts or portfolios of evidence.

If the marking of a script or portfolio of evidence is reviewed in this way, either the original examiner's mark will be confirmed, or the mark will change to a different mark as awarded by the senior examiner. Whether the mark changes or is confirmed depends on the reason for any differences in the marks and the tolerance of the paper or portfolio of evidence. We explain marking tolerance in the section *Professional judgement in marking and the use of tolerance*.

Examiner scaling (if applicable)

We sometimes increase or decrease the marks of all candidates whose scripts or portfolios of evidence were marked by a particular examiner. This is called examiner scaling. Examiner scaling is based on evidence from examiner monitoring and is used when an examiner's marking has been consistently slightly generous or slightly severe compared with the agreed marking standard set out by the Principal Examiner.

If we have adjusted a candidate's mark through examiner scaling, this adjustment will not appear on the front of the candidate's script or portfolio of evidence but will be reflected in their final mark.

Grade review (if applicable)

This is the mark that a senior examiner gave to the script or portfolio of evidence at grade review stage. The grade review consists of a targeted re-marking by senior examiners of the work of candidates who are most at risk of receiving inappropriate results. Candidates' work will be re-marked at grade review if they are close to a grade threshold at syllabus level and at risk for at least one other reason. A list of these reasons is maintained by Cambridge International.

Enquiry about results – review of marking service (if applicable)

This is the mark that a reviewing examiner gave to the script during an enquiry about results – review of marking service. An enquiry about results – review of marking includes checking whether there has been an error in the application of the mark scheme.

The mark given by the reviewing examiner for an enquiry about results – review of marking service might **not** be the same as the final mark awarded to the candidate, as is the case for examiner monitoring. We explain this in the section *Why does the mark on the front of the script not match the final mark?*

Differences and similarities between examiner monitoring, grade review and an enquiry about results

- Grade review is a **re-mark** of a script or portfolio of evidence.
- Examiner monitoring and an enquiry about results – review of marking both involve a **review** of the original marking of a script or portfolio of evidence.

The distinction between a re-mark and a review of marking is that, in a re-mark, the second mark prevails and replaces the original mark, while in a review of marking the original mark is changed only if there is an objective error in the original marking.

The two approaches can have different outcomes where the mark difference between the second examiner's mark and the original marking is because of a difference in judgement in applying the mark scheme. See the section 'Professional judgement in marking and the use of tolerance' for more information on reviews of marking.

Why are scripts selected for grade review treated differently?

Grade review is a targeted process; candidates are not selected at random. The candidates whose scripts or portfolios of evidence are selected for grade review are those who are close to a grade threshold at syllabus level and where one or more other factors suggest that the candidate may be at risk of receiving an inappropriate syllabus grade. It is this combination of factors that leads us to carry out a re-mark by a senior examiner at grade review. Where marks are changed at grade review, these mark changes are always implemented.

In contrast, scripts and portfolios of evidence which are sampled for examiner monitoring, or which become the subject of an enquiry about results, do not have this combination of factors. For this reason, we allow for slight differences in professional judgement between the original examiner and the reviewing examiner both before and after the publication of results. This is to be fair to all candidates, including those whose work was not sampled for examiner monitoring and those who did not request an enquiry about results. See the section 'Professional judgement in marking and the use of tolerance' for more information on reviews of marking.

Special consideration and access arrangements (if applicable)

This could also happen during the marking process but does not appear on the front of the candidate's script.

After a successful application for special consideration from a school, we make a post-exam adjustment to a candidate's mark to allow for any adverse circumstances, for example illness, bereavement, or temporary injury. If we have made an adjustment to the candidate's mark because of a special consideration application, this adjustment will not appear on the front of the candidate's script.

Adjustment of final mark – weighting factor (if applicable)

This could also happen during the marking process but does not appear on the front of the candidate's script.

In some syllabuses we apply a weighting factor to the marks so that they match the weighting the syllabus shows for each paper to contribute to the overall syllabus grade. This mark does not appear on the candidate's script but is the candidate's final mark that contributes to their syllabus grade.

Professional judgement in marking and the use of tolerance

During a review of the marking, to make sure that our marking is fair we need to differentiate between an objective error in marking by the original examiner and a legitimate variance of professional judgement between two different examiners.

Objective marking

In some exam questions, we only need to identify if a response is correct or incorrect, as specified in the mark scheme. This is what we call objective marking, as in the case of multiple-choice questions.

Where there is an objective error in the original marking, we always amend the original examiner's mark.

Subjective marking

Not all marking is purely objective: some marking requires the use of professional judgement by examiners, for example to mark an essay, or a written answer requiring some development or explanation. The examiner needs to make a judgement about the number of marks to award. This is what we call subjective marking. All portfolio of evidence marking is subjective.

In these cases, the examiner uses their professional judgement to determine the number of marks to award by using mark schemes, exemplars and marking guidance. We take great care to train our examiners to apply their professional judgement consistently, and we have several checks in place to make sure this happens.

Where marking involves professional judgement, we recognise that there can be legitimate variance in judgement between two examiners, without either examiner being wrong. The amount of variance that we consider acceptable is called a 'tolerance' and it is set individually for each paper or portfolio of evidence. The tolerance is determined by the nature of the marking and the level of professional judgement involved and is calculated based on the total mark for the paper or portfolio of evidence.

Tolerance before and after publication of results

When reviewing marking as part of examiner monitoring, if there is a subjective difference in marks that is within the tolerance – and therefore acceptable – we do not change the mark. However, if the subjective difference in marks is greater than the tolerance, we change the mark to be that of the senior examiner.

During the enquiry about results – review of marking process, a reviewing examiner looks at the original marking for that script or portfolio of evidence and states the mark they would have awarded. This review of marking after the publication of results uses same approach as the review of marking as part of examiner monitoring. After a review of marking, there will be an original examiner's mark and a reviewing examiner's mark.

- If the reviewing examiner would give the same mark as the original examiner, the mark is confirmed.
- If the reviewing examiner's mark is different from the original examiner's mark because of a difference in professional judgement, and if this difference is small enough to be within tolerance and therefore acceptable, we do not change the mark: the original mark is confirmed. In such cases, changing the mark would be inappropriate because there has been no error in the original application of the mark scheme.
- However, if the reviewing examiner's mark is different from the original examiner's mark and this difference is greater than the tolerance for the paper, we change the mark to be that of the reviewing examiner.

We apply this principle regardless of whether the reviewing examiner's mark is higher or lower than the original mark. By applying tolerance during the marking period before results are released and then during the enquiry about results period, we make sure that the same marking standard is applied to all candidates, and that therefore we are fair to all candidates, including those who have not applied for an enquiry about results.

Use of colour in annotation

The marks that appear on the candidate's script are the marks that examiners gave the candidate for the work on the script at the different stages of the marking process.

Examiners may also write comments on scripts showing the way in which candidates have met (or have not met) the requirements of the mark scheme, but they are not required to do so. For portfolio of evidence the comments will relate to the marking approach examiners used. If these comments are shown on the script, they are intended for other examiners rather than for schools or candidates. The comments you see could be from the original examiner and from any reviewing examiner at the different marking stages. These comments and symbols are called **annotations**.

What do the different colours of annotation mean?

If your candidate's script or portfolio of evidence has been marked on-screen, each stage in the marking or monitoring process could be shown in the following colours:

Stage in the marking or monitoring process	Colour of annotation or comments
Original marking	Red
Examiner monitoring (if applicable)	Brown
Grade review (if applicable)	Blue
Enquiry about results (if applicable)	Purple

If your candidate's script has been marked on paper, each stage in the marking or monitoring process could be shown in the following colours:

Stage in the marking or monitoring process	Colour of annotation
Original marking	Red
Examiner monitoring (if applicable)	Green
Grade review (if applicable)	Green, or purple if the script was selected for examiner monitoring and green was already used
Enquiry about results (if applicable)	Green or purple, or another colour if both colours have already been used on the script.

For scripts marked on paper, we check that all parts of the script were marked and that the marks were totalled correctly. You may see evidence of these checks on a candidate's script. If these checks have led to a change in the candidate's mark, this will also appear on a candidate's script in a box that looks like this:

CLERICAL CHECK ADJUSTMENT	
New total Mark	

The script may also have been marked as part of a grade review. If this has taken place, you may see the following box on the front of the script. This has been filled in as an example:

Grade Review	
Examiner team & position	2.01
Grade Review mark	56

Why does the mark on the front of the script or portfolio of evidence not match the final mark?

The mark shown on the front of the script may **not** match the candidate's final mark for one or more of the following reasons:

- If the difference between the original examiner's mark and the mark given by a reviewing examiner during (i) examiner monitoring or (ii) an enquiry about results is a matter of professional judgement, and the difference is small enough to be acceptable, we do not change the mark. Therefore, the original final mark may be different from the reviewed mark. We explain why we do this in the section *Professional judgement in marking and the use of tolerance*.
- If we made a post-exam adjustment to a candidate's mark after a successful application for special consideration, this adjusted mark does not appear on the front of the script. This would happen if you made an application for special consideration, and we let you know that your application was successful and that we adjusted your candidate's mark.
- If examiner scaling was applied to the original marking because the original examiner was found to be consistently slightly generous or slightly severe compared with the agreed marking standard set out by the Principal Examiner.
- If the final mark was adjusted by applying the weighting factor, this adjusted mark does not appear on the front of the script and, therefore, the mark given at the enquiry about results stage does not reflect the application of the weighting factor.
- If, for a language exam, the candidate had an access arrangement to use a scribe without dictating the spellings of words (opt-out). If a candidate opts out of dictating spelling, the total marks available for the paper do not change, but the marks corresponding to spelling in language exams are not awarded because the candidate would not demonstrate their spelling skills using this access arrangement. This is through a post-exam adjustment which does not appear on the front of the script.

When does the mark change following an enquiry about results?

When we review the marking of a paper through our enquiry about results service, we change a mark if we find that there was any of these **types of marking errors**:

- If there a clerical error was made in arriving at the total mark.
- If there is an objective error in the original marking, we correct the error. During the review of the marking, if the reviewing examiner finds that there is an objective error, we always amend the original examiner's mark to correct the error. This is only applicable when the paper includes questions that can be marked objectively and is not applicable to portfolio of evidence.
- If there is a subjective difference in marks that is greater than the tolerance, we change the mark. During the review of the marking, if the reviewing examiner awards either a higher or a lower mark that exceeds the level of tolerance, then this reviewed mark becomes the final mark. You can find out more information about the use of tolerance in the section *Professional judgement in marking and the use of tolerance*.

In these situations when we change the final mark, if this new mark leads to a new total syllabus mark that gives the candidate a different grade, we also amend the grade.

An overview of the journey of a candidate's script

This example shows all the adjustments that could be made to the marks during all the marking stages. In this example, the candidate's total original mark (raw mark) is 17 but their final mark is 28.5. In this example, the candidate's mark was not changed following an enquiry about results review of marking.

