



Board of Senior Secondary Studies

Teacher Guide
Best Practice in Meshing Unit Scores

Foreword

The Office of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies would like to thank the following teachers for their valuable contributions in producing this document.

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Background Information

The scaling of course scores by the BSSS is based on colleges producing a valid rank order. It is this rank and the gap between scores (Z score) that is crucial.

For the scaling of course scores, all T courses are placed in 'scaling' groups. This combination of courses into scaling groups can be broken down into

- Same course and
 - Same unit but different classes/teachers
 - Different units within that course
- Different courses.

At the end of each assessment period unit scores from all courses in the same scaling group must be reported on the same scale. It would be preferable if the same 'best practice' procedures could be followed for the meshing of all units regardless of the courses in the scaling group.

Ultimately teacher judgement of students' work is the basis for meshing. Standardising different units to an arbitrary common mean and standard deviation does not constitute valid and reliable meshing.

Half Standard Unit

Where a student completes a half standard unit which forms part of the standard unit that the other students are studying, then the student must be ranked on their performance in those assessment items that all students have completed.

That is, if a student completes the term 2 unit, then a unit score based on the term 2 assessment items is calculated for all students and the student's position in that rank order is determined relative to the other students. A unit score is then calculated for the student that maintains the student's position in the rank order and Z score as calculated from the term unit.

This is not the same as doubling the assessment item scores.

1 Same Course a. Same Unit

Meshing Process

At the beginning of the unit and prior to designing each assessment item teachers should discuss the skills and knowledge that are being assessed.

Requirements

- Common agreed criteria used for marking of student work
- Same type of assessment items (eg oral, essay, test, assignment, creative response, performance)
- Same weightings for all classes for the same type of assessment item
- Assessment items/marketing schemes/solutions are developed collaboratively
- Where possible, the one teacher marks a particular assessment item or part thereof for all classes. If the Principal or faculty agrees that this is not feasible, then the college must establish and document a procedure to ensure cross moderation/marketing of a significant sample of student work across all grade levels.
- Same notional zero for each class in each assessment item
- One common markbook.

b. Different Units

Meshing Process

At the beginning of the unit and prior to designing each assessment item teachers should discuss the skills and knowledge that are being assessed. The aim is to ensure that the assessment items assess similar skills and knowledge to the same standard.

Requirements

- Some common agreed criteria used for marking of student work
- Where feasible, use the same type of assessment items (eg oral, essay, test, assignment, creative response, performance). This is the first reference point for informing the meshing of unit scores.
- Cross moderation/marketing of a significant sample of student work across all grade levels occurs
- Where feasible, weightings for the same type of assessment item are the same for all units
- Assessment items/ marking schemes or solutions are developed collaboratively
- If on the same spreadsheet, then the same notional zero is used for each individual assessment item.

The use of statistical moderation only does not constitute a valid or reliable meshing procedure. However, a range of statistical data could be used in conjunction with the above procedures.

Sources of statistical data could include:

- A common assessment item marked by a teacher
- A meshing test that is given to all classes
- Any common testing data for the cohort
- Performance in previous common unit(s)*
- Performance in other similar subjects*
- Historical data for these units.*

* Students must be assessed and ranked on their performance in the assessment tasks within the current unit. Their performance in other subjects or units or historical data may not necessarily be a good indicator of performance in the current unit.

All meshing procedures should be supported by documentation that explains the process used. These procedures must be provided to students as per policy.
(refer Board policy 3.3.4)

2 Different Courses in Same Scaling Group

Background

In Other Course Score scaling (OCS), a small group is one where there are fewer than 11 students with a T package completing a course in that group. Modified OCS procedures occur for scaling groups where the number of students with a T package, completing course in that group is between 11 and 20. **Combining of courses into scaling groups is preferable to small group procedures.** The initial number of students (and hence courses) in a scaling group will vary from college to college. System wide the aim is to have at least 30 - 50 students initially in a scaling group to avoid it becoming a small group. Some courses have a higher attrition rate than others. As you know your clientele better than the Technical Adviser, these numbers are flexible.

Deciding in which scaling group a course should be placed is largely a college decision (in consultation with the Technical Adviser). Board Policy requires ESL to be in the a scaling group with either English or European languages and all T Maths courses to be in the same scaling group. (Refer Board policies 4.3.6.2.3, 4.3.6.2.4, 4.3.6.2.2)

Courses written under the same framework could be in the same scaling group as they share the same assessment task types and weightings. If this is not possible, then only courses where the assessment task types are the same or very similar (e.g. essay, portfolio, oral, practical) should be combined in the same scaling group.

Item by item meshing enables teachers and students to see the impact that the meshing has on the unit scores. It reminds students that their scores will be part of a larger group containing other courses and they are able to see their relative ranking in that larger group. It also enables the calculation of notional zero for that item which applies to all units in the scaling group.

Minimum requirements for meshing different courses

- Some common assessment criteria
- Similar assessment task types
- College personnel with appropriate expertise to oversee the process
- Developing and assessing similar essential skills and concepts.

Other useful methods

- Common students used as a basis for comparison
- Common teachers
- Common subject co-ordinator.

Meshing Process

At the beginning of the unit and prior to designing each assessment item teachers should discuss the skills and knowledge that are being assessed. Those who are teaching more than one unit to that particular year group and assessment period could provide a basis from which to start discussion. The aim would be that the assessment items would assess the similar skills and knowledge to the same standard.

Requirements

- Common agreed criteria used for marking of student work
- Where feasible, use the same type of assessment items (eg oral, essay, test, assignment, creative response, performance) This is the first reference point for informing the meshing of unit scores
- Cross moderation of a significant sample of all grade levels

- Where feasible, weightings for the same type of assessment item are the same for all units
- Assessment items/ marking schemes or solutions are developed collaboratively
- If on the same spreadsheet then the same notional zero is used for each individual assessment item.

Sources of statistical data could include:

Statistical moderation only, does not constitute a valid or reliable meshing procedure. However, a range of statistical data could be used in conjunction with the above meshing procedures.

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* Students must be assessed and ranked on their performance in the assessment tasks within the current unit. Their performance in other subjects or units or historical data may not necessarily be a good indicator of performance in the current unit.

All meshing procedures should be supported by documentation that explains the process used. These procedures must be provided to students as per policy. (refer Board policy 4.3.5.1)