

The role of Team Leader in e-marking

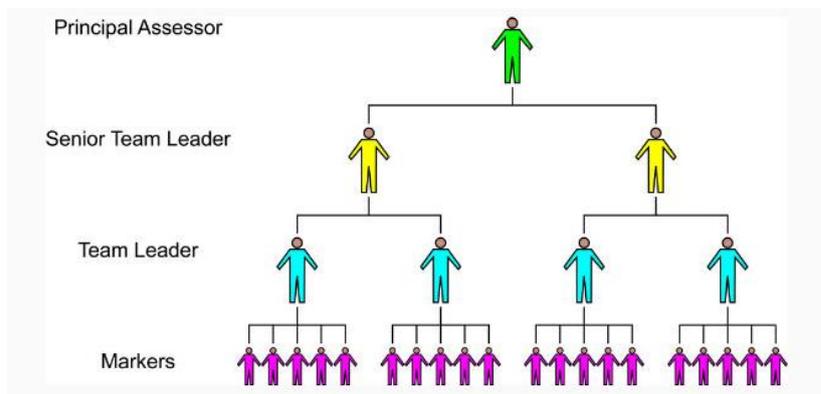
Congratulations on being selected as a Team Leader for e-marking. This is a highly valued role and carries responsibilities in setting and maintaining the marking standards and supervising/mentoring of e-markers in addition to marking your own allocation.

In recognition of this key role, SQA pays a responsibility fee which is based on the number of Markers you are responsible for — normally eight Markers to each Team Leader.

E-marking team structure

Markers are carefully selected and trained, and are required to have a number of years of teaching experience. Markers are assigned to a marking team under the supervision of a Team Leader (TL), who is in turn supervised by the Principal Assessor (PA) for that team. In large marking teams there may also be a tier of Senior Team Leaders (STLs), who assist the PA and provide support to TLs.

The Principal Assessor, Senior Team Leaders and Team Leaders are collectively known as the **standardisation team**. The standardisation team is responsible for setting the marking standard.



Setting the marking standard

The marking standard is established at a standardisation event where the standardisation team initially selects, reviews and provisionally marks live candidate responses. The team then finalises the Marking Instructions (MIs), definitively marks the candidate responses, and determines item and paper level tolerances. They also classify selected responses as Practice, Qualification or Seeded scripts.

Practice scripts allow Markers to familiarise themselves with the Question Paper and MIs. The standardisation team will write a commentary for each Practice script to highlight how the MIs have been applied and why a mark has or has not been awarded. This provides the Marker with a rich source of feedback (available only after they have marked and submitted each script) enabling them to self-assess and refine their own marking.

Qualification scripts allow Markers to demonstrate that they are applying the MIs accurately and consistently, and therefore marking to standard, before being approved to mark live candidate responses.

Seeded scripts allow Markers to demonstrate that they continue to mark to standard through live marking.

Depending on the size of the standardisation team and the volume of each type of script to be selected, the team may work in two groups — core and non-core. The **core group** will attend the full standardisation event and be involved in the initial selection and marking of standardisation scripts, whilst the **non-core group** will attend later in the event to confirm marking decisions and provide input to the finalisation of the MIs.

Monitoring marking standards

Once the standardisation event is complete, Markers will have access to Practice and Qualification scripts. At this stage the TLs carefully review Markers' performance on the Qualification scripts and provide guidance and feedback to ensure the mark scheme is applied accurately and consistently. Markers are required to mark five out of eight Qualification scripts (or equivalent percentage) to standard. The Markers who pass standardisation can then automatically proceed to mark live scripts.

Marking accuracy is continually monitored by:

- interspersing Seeded scripts amongst Markers' online marking (if a Marker fails to mark one of these scripts to standard it will result in the Marker being put on hold, requiring intervention by the TL)
- TLs reviewing a sample of marked scripts from each Marker
- PAs checking TLs' marking and their supervision of the Markers
- asking Markers to re-mark scripts that have been marked inaccurately

Supporting Markers

In addition to ensuring Markers are marking to standard, TLs need to be available to resolve marking queries and script exceptions. Clearly this availability cannot be open-ended, so it is important to set clear expectations with your Markers in terms of availability. You should advise your team of the specific days and times you plan to be available to provide this support. Arrangements should be made with fellow TLs or the PA to cover any planned unavailability.

This is a very important support role and needs to be handled carefully, so that positive advice is given and Markers feel supported and not overly criticised. Having said that, if you have an underperforming Marker, or one who is monopolising too much of your time, this has to be flagged (along with the evidence of the issue) to your PA so that, if necessary, SQA can resolve the issue by taking the appropriate action.

The scoris assessor system supports direct communication between TLs and Markers as it has an inbuilt messaging function. Not only does it allow messages to be exchanged, but you can also 'tag' a specific response which you wish to discuss. For example, if a Marker is unsure how to mark a particular candidate's response, perhaps because the candidate has answered the question in an unusual way, scoris assessor allows both you and the Marker to view the same response at the same time. This will allow you to discuss the response and determine the appropriate mark or course of action. You can also use this functionality to exemplify good or poor practice.

The messaging system will also be used by the PA and SQA to communicate key messages to the whole marking team throughout the marking period.

Monitoring marking progress

There is a limited window for marking and it is essential that Markers complete their standardisation and live script marking within this window. Markers are asked to mark at a consistent pace across the marking period. TLs will have access to reports to monitor this. Where a Marker does not comply, TLs should intervene, encouraging the Marker to pick up their marking rate. If progress does not improve, TLs should advise the PA and SQA.

Marker Reports

All Markers have a key performance measure (KPM) to submit a Marker Report on completion of their marking. To ensure that this is achieved, TLs must communicate the importance of this and monitor that their Markers meet this measure. The reports are issued and completed electronically. SQA will send a message in scoris to advise when reports are available to complete. You will also need to submit your own Marker Report.

Case review

The PA and a number of TLs (depending on the volume of cases/activity required) will be asked to attend a case review event. This event takes place after grade boundaries have been set and is where the team consider any exceptional circumstances requests, mark any unmarked scripts and resolve any outstanding marking queries or exceptions.

Results Services

After results have been issued, TLs may be asked to undertake marking reviews — depending on the volume of Results Services requests received by SQA. This will involve reviewing scripts using scoris assessor to ensure that the original marking was in line with the national standard.

In summary

Team Leaders are required to:

- have a detailed understanding of the Marking Instructions, including where and why marks were assigned in standardisation scripts
- demonstrate excellent communication and interpersonal skills and be able to engage positively with all members of their team
- work co-operatively and professionally with the PA, other TLs and SQA staff, accepting and providing feedback as appropriate
- demonstrate excellent organisational and administrative skills and be able to manage themselves and members of their team to meet deadlines

You may also be interested in viewing the e-marking case studies which are on SQA's website www.sqa.org.uk/amcasestudies