

Guidelines for Third Opinions on Project Marks

We require a third opinion under three circumstances, based on the final assessment.

- (i) Average mark (of first and second marker) is greater than 80%.
- (ii) Average mark (of first and second marker) is a fail.
- (iii) Technical Report Marks from first and second marker differ by more than 10%.

Case (i) What the third opinion is required to do in case (i) is verify that the supervisor/second marker combination have arrived at a result that appears reasonable on the basis of the dissertation alone. If the third opinion arrives at a *dissertation* mark within 10% of the first and second marker, the first and second marker's assessment is confirmed. Otherwise, it should be discussed with the year3 tutor and the head of teaching and a majority decision reached.

Case (ii) What the third opinion is required to do here is make a judgement as to whether the dissertation is sufficiently poor to represent a failed effort. Again, it is only the dissertation part of the project that the third opinion can sensibly comment on. If two opinions find the dissertation a pass, the remaining one should modify his assessment accordingly. If the case of a fail arising as a result of "engineering ability" assessment, neither the second marker or third opinion are well placed to make a judgement and the supervisor should ensure that the verbal justification for "engineering ability" marks awarded is appropriately detailed.

Case (iii) What the third opinion is required to do in case (iii) is resolve a difference of opinion between first and second marker. Again, the third opinion is based on the dissertation. Here the situation may be more complicated. The supervisor will have a more detailed knowledge of the project execution than either second marker or third opinion but one might expect the dissertation mark awarded by each of the three to be in reasonable agreement. If it isn't, there should be negotiation between the three with a view to bringing together first and second marker's marks ... and it should be first and second marker's marks that ultimately are used. If two of the three opinions agree and one is markedly (more than 10%) different the odd one out should be expected to moderate their mark to fall within 10% of the other two.

Where the problem lies with the "engineering ability" part of the project, the opinion of the supervisor should normally prevail. In such cases, the supervisor should make sure that his supporting narrative justifies the "engineering ability" mark given in a sufficiently full way to convince the examiners that his assessment is the appropriate one.