Preliminary marks ahead of January exam boards

*Iain Murray, March 2019*

This year the MSc cohort didn’t get their exam marks until week 3. Some students are surprised by low marks in technical courses. A mechanism to release results earlier would help students make better course choices.

It is unfortunate that some students are surprised by results, and we should separately reflect on feedback mechanisms. But realistically, this problem isn’t going to go away next year.

This proposal suggests that in January 2020 we try to release some preliminary exam marks when they are available.

The taught assessment regulations dictate what procedures we can follow: https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/assessment

46.4 Throughout the year, before consideration by a Board of Examiners, marks for examinations and assessed coursework are provisional and have no status until they are approved or modified by the Board. If such marks are released before confirmation by the Board of Examiners, students must be advised that the marks are provisional and may be modified when considered at the Board of Examiners meeting.

47.5 Students’ results (including assessment component and course marks, programme and progression outcomes) may not be released over the telephone or informally via email. Students only receive their results via formal communication channels.

47.11 Once a final award, final degree programme or final course result and progression decision has been agreed by the Board of Examiners and other relevant bodies, then Schools may contact students who have failed before the decision is published in EUCLID Student View. Schools should not give informal indications about the final award, final degree programme or final course result or progression decision in advance of the decision of the Board of Examiners and/or other relevant bodies. See regulation 46.4 for the release of provisional marks.

So, we could release some exam results (viewable in the Assessment tab in Euclid) before the board. As long as we don’t release them informally, and make it clear the final course mark and outcome has not been decided.

If it’s clear a course’s results won’t be available until after the board, we should tell students that too.

This year the MLPR exam was marked before Christmas. I think it would have been possible to get the marks checked and entered in the two weeks of January before week 1 (and maybe they were).