

# Examinations Data Subject Access Request (SAR) guidance

## Introduction

The following guidance is provided to help you understand the exam mark breakdown you have been provided and to answer frequently asked questions. This guidance should be read in conjunction with:

- [Examinations Data Retention Policy](#)
- [Marking Guidelines](#)
- [Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedures](#)

Subject Access Requests should be submitted to [data.protection@actuaries.org.uk](mailto:data.protection@actuaries.org.uk).

Once a subject access request has been processed an email will be sent to your current email address that the IFoA has on record. The email will contain instructions on how to access your subject access request through your Account on the IFoA website.

## How to read your Exam Data SAR

### Questions

A list of the questions in the exam paper

### Available Marks:

The marks available for the designated question/question part

### Marker 1:

The individual marks awarded by the first marker.

### Marker 2:

The individual marks awarded by the second marker.

### Script review:

This column(s) will be present if your script has been reviewed and a partial or full re-mark has occurred. There could be more than one script review column if the script was reviewed more than once.

### Final Marks:

The column contains the final marks for your script. Please see the [Marking Guidelines](#) for how your final marks are calculated.

### Global Scaling

**Board of Examiner decision:** This will appear below the breakdown of marks if it was decided by the Board of Examiners to apply global scaling. Global scaling is an adjustment applied to the whole cohort so the marks better reflect the achievements of the candidates sitting the assessment. For instance, scaling may be needed where an error or ambiguity in an assessment question is discovered or the paper is significantly harder or easier than intended. When this happens it may result in either an upward or downward adjustment being made to the pass mark and to the final marks awarded to the candidates.

For more information please also refer to the [Examiner Report](#).

### Mitigating Circumstances

**Mitigating Circumstances:** 'Y' will appear below the breakdown of marks if the Mitigating Circumstances Panel made the decision to adjust your final mark. For more information, please also refer to the [Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#).

## Frequently asked questions

### Where can I find the final mark and grade for my exam attempt?

The final mark and grade is located on the Exam Results letter. This can be accessed through your Account on the IFoA website.

### What is the pass mark for my exam?

The pass mark for the exam can be found at the bottom of the breakdown of marks. You can also refer to the [Examiner Report](#) for more information about the exam paper.

### How do I calculate my final marks?

The final mark will be calculated as follows:

- The average of the first and second marks only, where no additional marking has taken place as part of the script review process.
- A combination of first and second mark averages (where no third mark has been awarded as part of the script review process) and the third mark awarded to questions/parts of questions which have been remarked as part of the script review. For example, the mark for question 1 is the average of first and second marking, question 2 is the mark awarded following script review.
- Script review marks only (in cases where the whole script has been remarked)
- Final script review marks only.

For dual paper assessments, the final mark is determined by the weighting of the paper. For example, in an assessment with a 70:30 weighting the final mark is 70% of paper 1 plus 30% of paper 2.

The final mark reported to candidates will be a whole number from 0 to 100. When marking, the markers may award a 0.5 mark, and due to this in many cases the average of first and second marks, before rounding, can include 0.25 marks. In all cases where the final mark is not a whole number, the final mark reported to candidates is rounded down to the next lower whole number.

For more information please refer to the [Marking Guidelines](#)

### I applied for Mitigating Circumstances but do not have a Mitigating Circumstances indicator on my SAR?

If your final mark was within 3 marks of the pass mark your application would have been reviewed by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel. Applications made by candidates who obtained a pass during the marking process will not be reviewed by the Panel.

The Panel will decide whether your final mark should be brought up to the pass mark or not. You will not have a Mitigating Circumstance indicator if your final mark was not adjusted by the Mitigating Circumstance Panel. You will receive an email within 5 working days of the results being released to confirm whether your final mark was changed or not.

### Who completes a script review?

Script review is completed by either a senior examiner or the Chief Examiner. During a script review the senior examiner or Chief Examiner will review the marks awarded by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> marker. The senior examiners and the Chief Examiner are also involved in the setting of the exam paper and oversee the marking of the paper. As such they are in a position to decide whether the marks awarded by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> marker are an accurate representation of the candidate's performance.

#### Why was my script not script reviewed?

A script may not be identified for review if it does not fall within the script review criteria. The script review criteria can be found in the [Marking Guidelines](#).

#### Why did the script reviewer not record a mark/why did they agree with the average marks of the 1st and 2nd marker?

Marks awarded by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> marker are reviewed as part of a script review. When completing this review, the reviewer may agree with the average of the marks awarded. If at any stage of the process they determine that a mark which has been awarded is not appropriate they will remark the question or question part concerned.

#### Why was my script reviewed when it did not meet any of the criteria for script review?

In some cases a script may be reviewed by the Chief Examiner or a senior examiner when it did not meet the criteria for review. This may occur if there was a large difference between the marks awarded by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> markers, for example. Or if the marking scheme was amended after the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> marks were awarded, which may occur if the Examining team identify an ambiguity in the mark scheme during the marking process.

#### Why was my script reviewed more than once?

Your script may have been reviewed more than once as part of the standard setting process. Reviewing scripts allows the senior examining team to establish what the minimally competent candidate should achieve in the exam and thus determine the final pass mark.

#### Why is there a large difference between the 1st marker and the 2nd marker?

There may be differences in the marks awarded by the 1st and 2nd markers as scripts are marked independently by two markers who do not know what each other has awarded.

Due to the nature of many assessments, it is accepted that markers may disagree about the mark awarded for a question. It is accepted industry norm that a final mark may differ up to a total of 10 marks. As questions become more complex they also become more subjective to judgement. Lower levels of agreement may be a result of legitimate differences in opinion between equally qualified markers. These complex questions are an important aspect of the IFoA examinations and essential in assessing the specific knowledge and skills required.

The IFoA marking guidelines have been developed with the understanding that there can be differences in the marks awarded, and for this reason there is strict review parameters that dictate which candidate scripts require further review by a senior examiner.

We have seen in some of our subjects the variance between the 1st and 2nd marker is beyond the accepted industry normal level of 10 marks, and have a program of marker quality improvement initiatives in progress. We have already implemented a number of these improvements, including full on-screen marking for the majority of examinations, a two-stage standardisation process at the start of the marking process and marker tolerance and approval limits. We continue with this program of work to reduce the number of instances where the marker variance is greater than 10 marks.

#### What should I do if I think there has been an error in the marking of my paper?

All candidates who take the IFoA assessments have the right to appeal against an exam result if they have reasonable grounds to do so.

You may make an appeal on the following grounds:

- Irregular procedure or improper conduct of an assessment.
- Extenuating personal circumstances which affected your assessment, you could not reasonably disclose under the [Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#)

If you wish to make an appeal you need to complete a Stage one application within 40 days of the release of the exam result.

For more information, please see the [Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedures](#)