

## POLICY DOCUMENT

# MODERATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

## 1 Purpose and Scope

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The College is committed to the processes of moderation of academic standards at the systemic and individual level.

Moderation is part of a quality assurance process directed at ensuring that assessments are marked with accuracy, consistency and fairness. Normally moderation is expected for every assessment task.

The fundamental purpose of moderation is to promote assessment quality and compliance with:

- a. Standards required by the AQF (courses and subjects)
- b. Standards required by external accreditation authorities
- c. Standards required by professional associations
- d. The expectation of comparability of assessment outcomes in equivalent courses internally and externally.

## 2 Policy Statement

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### 2.1 Preamble

Academic institutions are obliged to facilitate the process of moderation in academic practice. Effective moderation is fundamental to the ongoing development of academic quality. Moderation can be effected through several methods and is part of the quality cycle. It spans the entire assessment event, including the design and post-event analysis of the validity of the assessment of student learning. Moderation is undertaken to ensure assessment activities have been designed and implemented appropriately and that students and staff can be confident that the results provided are valid and reliable.

## 2.2 Principles

Within the context described above, moderation can be viewed as a set of tasks and actions undertaken internally. To guide the tasks and actions, the following principles and responsibilities have been developed to facilitate effective moderation:

- 2.2.1 There is constructive alignment within a subject.
- 2.2.2 Procedures for assessment are explicit, valid and reliable and these procedures are made public to all stakeholders.
- 2.2.3 Assessment tasks reflect the learning outcomes as stated in the subject outline.
- 2.2.4 Students are made aware of assessment requirements in the first week.

## 2.3 Moderation

### **2.3.1 Overview**

- Moderation refers to a range of activities which provide confirmation that, at all stages of the assessment lifecycle, assessment has been conducted in accordance with the Policy.
- Moderation involves elements of both quality assurance (before assessment is implemented) and quality control (after assessment) and must, on a regular basis, include the input of an academic not currently involved in the teaching of the subject.

### **2.3.2 Requirements**

- All summative assessment must be subject to moderation.
- Ensuring that assessment is effectively conducted is a collective responsibility to be exercised through the operation of internal moderation procedures.
- The method of moderation may vary between departments.
- Departments are responsible for ensuring that all staff involved in subject design, and/or marking are adequately prepared for this activity, particularly those with less experience or who are new to the College.
- Departments must have documented processes for internal moderation, which are provided to all staff involved in the assessment process. The key elements of the information must be made easily available to students, for example, included in Subject outlines.

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- Evidence of moderation should be recorded/retained by the subject coordinator until the next subject review.
- The effectiveness of moderation processes will be evaluated periodically via the Learning and Teaching Committee.

## **2.4 Moderation and the Assessment of Lifecycle**

Moderation will occur at all stages of the assessment lifecycle, including:

- Setting and modification of assessment criteria and standards.
- Design and modification of assessment tasks and rubrics.
- Pre-Marking (if more than one marker).
- Marking/Grading.
- Review and Evaluation.

## **2.5 Setting and modification of assessment criteria and Standards**

Moderation, however organised, should confirm that the assessment criteria and standards:

- Relate to the demonstration of the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the subject learning outcomes, achievement of which is being assessed.
- Are clear and sufficient to differentiate levels of achievement.
- Can be understood by students and all members of staff involved in the grading of assessments.

## **2.6 Design and modification of assessment tasks and rubrics**

Each Head of Department should ensure the appropriateness of the type of assessment tasks across a course as accredited by TEQSA / NESA.

Internal processes will ensure the moderation of specific assessment tasks. This might be carried out either amongst paired colleagues, within teaching teams or by a departmental or course committee. However organised, the aim of this moderation should be to ensure that:

- Each task is a valid means of providing students with an opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes for the subject.

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- The questions or instructions are clearly worded and contain no ambiguities as to what students are expected to do.
- The assessment workload is appropriate to the assessment across the course.
- The time allowed for completion of the task is reasonable.
- All students can reasonably be expected to have access to the resources required for completion of the task.
- There is a clear marking scheme or rubric confirming correct answers or key features of model answers and if applicable, directions where and how marks are to be apportioned according to performance in specific questions or against specific assessment criteria and standards.

## 2.7 Pre Marking

All markers must be familiar with the assessment standards, and agree on marking processes. The aims of this moderation are to:

- clarify any misunderstanding of assessment requirements; and
- ensure shared understanding and application of criteria and standards for assessment.

Common forms of pre-marking moderation may include:

- Pre-marking meetings with the teaching team and a step-by-step discussion of each question, checking for clarity and lack of ambiguity and for consensus around expectations of student responses.
- Trial marking to refine the marking scheme and generate shared understandings of expected standards.

For assessment tasks where there is only one marker, the marker may pilot mark a number of scripts to familiarize themselves with the standards.

## 2.8 Marking/Grading

Marks moderation must ensure that the judgements/marks have been arrived at accurately, consistently and fairly in accordance with the assessment criteria.

Common forms of moderation may include:

- Checks for the consistent application of standards between different markers, through the use of comparative measures such as failure rates.
- For a sample of submissions,

- Checking that the mark or grade awarded by the first marker is appropriate in accordance with the assessment criteria/marketing scheme.
- Second marking (also referred to as double marking) the work in order to confirm the first mark, where the first mark is known to the second marker.
- Blind second marking which means that the first mark is not known by the second marker.

## 2.9 Review and Evaluation

The teaching team should identify and address areas for improvement in curriculum and assessment design in time for modification for the next subject offering.

## 3 Definitions

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- **Moderation** is part of a quality assurance process directed at ensuring that assessments are marked with accuracy, consistency and fairness. Normally moderation is expected for every assessment task.
- **Award course** is a formally accredited and approved program of study which can lead to a qualification granted by the College.

## 4 Related Documents

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- Academic Progression Policy and Procedure
- Assessment Policy and Procedure
- Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Consultation Policy
- Examinations Policy and Procedure
- Special Consideration Policy and Procedure
- Intervention Strategy for Students At Risk

### **Legislation:**

- Higher Education Standards Framework 2015
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011

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- National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018

## 5 Policy Administration

<b>Policy Name &amp; Code:</b>			Moderation Policy and Procedure (POL-07)
<b>Policy Owner:</b>			CEO and Dean
<b>Approval Authority:</b>			Academic Board
<b>Date for Next Review:</b>			May 2020
<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>
12 Mar 18	13 Mar 18	1	Document reviewed and approved by Academic Board. Extracted from Academic Board Rules and expanded. Effective 13 March 2018. Benchmarking: MQ University.
26 Jun 18	27 Jun 18	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content revised to ensure accuracy.</li> <li>• Changes made to policy format: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Old logo with references to Study Group removed.</li> <li>- Document code, version and dates moved to policy Administration Section.</li> <li>- Paragraphs numbered.</li> <li>- 'Further information section' with references to related policies moved to new 'Related Documents' section. It includes list of all related policies, procedures, and other documents.</li> <li>- Policy Administration) table reformatted.</li> <li>- Numbering system updated.</li> <li>- Footer updated to include document title, document number and document version.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
04 Oct 18	05 Oct 18	3	Policy content revised to ensure it complies with relevant HES, particularly, 1.3.3, 1.3.4, 1.3.5, 1.4.1, 1.4.3.
14 Mar 19	14 Mar 19	3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• References to Dean and Operations Director replaced with CEO and Dean.</li> <li>• References to Student Services and Learning Support Manager replaced with Director of Student Services and Campus Wellbeing.</li> </ul>

\* Unless otherwise indicated, this policy will still apply beyond the review date.