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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Moderation is a quality assurance process that aims to ensure the appropriate quality of (i) assessment tasks and (ii) assessment outcomes, with valid and consistent judgment of student performance in terms of standards of achievement. Standards-based assessment (criterion-referenced) aims to achieve comparability of results between students, and this is further enhanced by collaboration between assessors and reviewers, so that the marks/grades awarded to individual students are academically defensible.
- 1.2 Moderation involves collaboration between academic staff, with the aim of reviewing assessment tasks and assessment criteria before a unit begins and then reviewing judgments of student performance (marks/grades) on completion of the assessment tasks, to ensure that:
- Assessment tasks are appropriate, in terms of their alignment with learning outcomes (pre- assessment)
 - Assessment criteria are appropriate, in terms of the characteristics against which assessments are measured (pre-assessment), and
 - Marks/grades are appropriate, in terms of the standards of performance achieved against the assessment criteria. This is particularly important where more than one person is involved in assessing student performance, to ensure equity and consistency in assessment.
- 1.3 This procedure has been developed to define the processes required for moderation of assessment across all higher education units at CQUniversity.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure applies to staff who have a role in higher education delivery and/or support of learning and teaching across all Schools, Divisions and Centres.

3 PROCEDURE

Moderation of assessment tasks (pre-assessment)

- 3.1 The Unit Coordinator is responsible for the academic leadership and oversight of all aspects of CQUniversity units allocated to them, as set out in the Unit Coordinator Duty Statement. This includes the setting and review of assessment tasks.

- 3.2 Unit Coordinators will prepare draft assessment tasks in Nexus, with sufficient descriptive detail of the task and its assessment criteria to enable a reviewer to assess whether it aligns with the learning outcomes being assessed, in a timeline that enables the publication of these details in the unit profile. If other staff are involved in teaching the unit in addition to the Unit Coordinator, they should be included in the preparatory stages (pre-assessment discussions), to provide peer feedback on the assessment tasks as part of a process of consensus moderation (see also 3.6, below).
- 3.3 Each unit will be assigned a Reviewer, whose role is to confirm the suitability of the assessment tasks described in the draft unit profile, working collaboratively with the unit coordinator to resolve any issues raised during the review process and thereby ensure that assessments are well designed and that their requirements are clearly explained to students.
- 3.4 The Unit Coordinator will confirm publication of the unit profile only after the Reviewer has agreed that no further changes are required to the assessment task description and associated assessment criteria.

Moderation of marks/grades (post-assessment)

- 3.5 The Unit Coordinator is responsible for the academic leadership and oversight of all aspects of CQUniversity units allocated to them, as set out in the Unit Coordinator Duty Statement. This includes the management of marking/grading, including the collation, moderation and submission of results and finalisation of grades.
- 3.6 Moderation of marks/grades may take place by one of two alternative processes, either (i) **consensus moderation** (sometimes termed 'social moderation'), involving all assessors in a unit, or (ii) **expert moderation**, where the unit coordinator acts as moderator of marks/grades for all other markers.
- 3.7 Where moderation of marks/grades occurs through consensus moderation, all assessors including the Unit Coordinator will be involved in the marking/grading process. This approach aims to reach agreement of all assessors, in terms of a shared understanding of the measurement and standards of student performance. Consensus moderation of assignment or examination scripts, involves one or more moderation meetings (face-to-face or virtual) and discussion between the assessors, sharing their judgments' on examples of students' work in order to reach agreement about the marks/grades awarded to work of a particular standard of performance. It is best conducted during the early stages of marking, by the circulation of representative examples of student work together with assessment criteria and any marking guidelines/standards rubrics, followed by individual marking across all assessors, with subsequent discussion and agreement on the appropriate mark to be awarded against each of the assessment criteria, and for the overall assessment at the moderation meeting. The process should facilitate the resolution of any issues raised across the team of assessors, resulting in agreement on the appropriate marks/grades to be awarded across the cohort and thereby confirming the appropriateness of the outcomes of the assessment process.
- 3.8 Alternatively, where moderation of marks/grades occurs through a process of 'expert moderation', the Unit Coordinator acts as the moderator for all other assessors in the unit, taking sole responsibility for confirming that appropriate marks/grades have been awarded. Under this procedure, Unit Coordinators must:
 - a) Contact teaching staff including tutors, assessors and lecturing staff associated with the unit prior to the start of term to discuss details of assessment tasks, assessment criteria, marking and moderation procedures prior to the start of term
 - b) Provide assessment criteria and marking guidelines to assessors no later than the assessment submission date. Assessors should be instructed to begin their marking as soon as possible after the submission/examination date, in order to facilitate moderation by the Unit Coordinator.
- 3.9 For assessments other than exams:
 - a) Select and moderate at least five examples of students' work, ranging from fail, pass, credit, distinction and high distinction from each assessor, within five working days of the submission date. If enrolments in a unit are over 50, up to 10% of students' work may be moderated, as deemed appropriate by the Unit Coordinator. With online submission in Moodle, the selection and moderation process should be relatively straightforward, since Unit Coordinators will be able to access students' work. For other assessments, Unit Coordinators should arrange for submission of relevant materials by alternative means.

- b) Moderate grades and provide feedback to assessors within five working days of the submission date. The Unit Coordinator will provide feedback and advise the assessor directly of any required adjustments to their marking. This may necessitate the assessor adjusting previous marks awarded to conform to the moderated sample (no marks must be released to students during this period).
 - c) Require acknowledgement of feedback from the assessor and confirmation that feedback is being acted on by assessors within two working days of moderation feedback being provided.
- 3.10 For examinations:
- a) Receive and moderate copies of at least five exam papers, ranging from fail, pass, credit, distinction and high distinction from each assessor, within five working days of the date of receipt. If enrolments in a unit are over 50, up to 10% of exams may be moderated, as deemed appropriate by the Unit Coordinator, Unit Coordinators should liaise with other assessors to agree on the best means of providing copies of marked exam papers.
 - b) Moderate grades and provide feedback to assessors within five working days of the date of receipt of exam papers. The Unit Coordinator will provide feedback and advise the assessor directly of any required adjustments to their exam marking. This may necessitate the assessor adjusting previous exam marks awarded to conform to the moderated sample (no marks must be released to students during this period).
 - c) Require acknowledgement of feedback from the assessor and confirmation that feedback is being acted on by assessors within two working days of moderation feedback being provided.
 - d) Receive a list of all assignment marks from the assessor on completion of marking and within 10 working days of the assignment due date.
 - e) Irrespective of the approach taken, marks/grades must only be released to students once the moderation process is complete, in line with the requirements of the [Assessment of Policy and Procedure \(Higher Education Coursework\)](#).
- 3.11 It is the responsibility of all assessors, including the Unit Coordinator, to ensure that assessment items returned to students contain only one substantiated moderated mark, and that any adjustments to marks that have occurred as a result of the moderation process have been made prior to the return of work to students.
- 3.12 It is the responsibility of all assessors to meet the timeframes for marking and moderation as outlined in these procedures. Any delay in provision of assessment marks may put at risk the timely provision of results and feedback to students. Where submission of marks, or the moderation process itself is delayed without prior negotiation, the appropriate academic supervisor (Dean of School/Head of Course, or nominee) must be advised by the Unit Coordinator.
- 3.13 Unit Coordinators are responsible for maintaining regular contact with assessors throughout the term, during the moderation processes for each marked piece of assessment and as part of the moderation of overall results before presentation to the appropriate Qualification Committee.
- 3.14 Unit Coordinators are responsible for preparing an assessment report, to confirm that appropriate moderation procedures have been followed during the unit, as well as unit assessment breakdowns, results and grade distributions at the conclusion of each term. These will be presented to the appropriate Qualification Committee, and to the Divisional Assessment Committee.
- 3.15 Unit Coordinators will attend a Qualification Committee meeting where unit assessment breakdowns, results and grade distributions, moderation and status report are prepared for the relevant School HECQ Committee Assessment meeting either in person, via a proxy (nominated staff member), videoconference or telephone link-up. Alternatively, Unit Coordinators will provide full written comments for the marks for their unit. If the Unit Coordinator does not attend in person, they must be contactable readily or have fully briefed the Dean of School or proxy to answer unit result queries from the assessment meeting.
- 3.16 Assessors are responsible for ensuring that assessment items and examinations from his/her group are marked fairly and consistently when compared with others in the unit. This will require regular ongoing reciprocal communication with the Unit Coordinator. Assessors will:
- a) Ensure that no marks are returned to students until the moderation process is completed.

- b) Ensure that assessment criteria sheets and/or marks returned to students with an assessment item include only the one substantiated moderated mark. Under no circumstances should a student receive both an original and a moderated mark.
- 3.17 Provide Unit Coordinators with sample copies of marked assessment items for moderation which span the range of grades, if assessment items are not submitted online. The original must remain secure. Five marked papers, including marks and comments, are to be provided to Unit Coordinator. The samples are to cover the range of grades including pass, credit, distinction, high distinction and fail, where possible. Unit Coordinators may request up to 10% of assessment items prior to assessment due date if the unit on a campus has more than 50 students.
- 3.18 Communicate with Unit Coordinators, who will provide feedback and advice of required adjustments to their marking. This may necessitate the assessor adjusting previous marks awarded to conform to the moderated sample.
- 3.19 Ensure that component changes that constitute the moderated mark must be made on the assessment item feedback before they are returned to students.
- 3.20 Ensure that no assignment items or results are released until the Unit Coordinator has completed the moderation process. The Unit Coordinator shall formally communicate the date of completion of moderation to all assessors.
- 3.21 Ensure that all students receive timely and constructive feedback on their assessment items, in line with the [Assessment Policy and Procedure \(Higher Education Coursework\)](#).
- 3.22 Provide the Unit Coordinator with a full listing of marks for each student and assessment item when marking and moderation has been completed, as described in this procedure, and submit the list by the date specified by the Unit Coordinator.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 4.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) relevant Dean of School, Head of Course, Unit Coordinator and all assessors are responsible for ensuring this procedure is followed.

Reporting

- 4.2 No additional reporting is required.

Records management

- 4.3 Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this procedure in a recognised University recordkeeping system.

5 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Assessment Policy and Procedure \(Higher Education Coursework\)](#)

[Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework Policy](#)

7 FEEDBACK

- 7.1 University staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@cqu.edu.au.

8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Academic Board
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Administrator	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
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