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## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This procedure outlines the processes for [moderating](#) assessment at CQUniversity.

## 2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure applies to enabling, undergraduate and postgraduate (including hyperflexible), and research coursework units offered by CQUniversity.
- 2.2 This procedure does not apply to vocational education and training (VET), micro-credentials and research higher degrees.

## 3 PROCEDURE

- 3.1 University assessments undergo a standards-based assessment (criterion-referenced), which is further enhanced by collaboration between assessors and reviewers (moderation), to ensure comparability of results between students and that marks/grades awarded to individual students are academically defensible.
- 3.2 [Moderation](#) involves collaboration between academic employees, with the aim of reviewing assessment tasks and assessment criteria before a unit begins, and then reviewing judgements 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 (post-assessment). This is particularly important where more than one person is involved in assessing student performance, to ensure equity and consistency in assessment.
- 3.3 While moderation is typically conducted on a term basis, units delivered via the hyperflexible delivery model are moderated on a continuing basis.

## Moderation of assessment tasks (pre-assessment)

- 3.4 Unit Coordinators must prepare draft assessment tasks in the University's Academic Information Management System (AIMS), 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. Draft assessment tasks must be completed in AIMS within the specified timeframe that enables the publication of these details in the unit profile. If other employees are involved in teaching the unit, the Unit Coordinator should involve them in the preparatory stages where possible (pre-assessment discussions) to provide peer feedback on the assessment tasks as part of the consensus moderation process (see 3.7 below).
- 3.5 Each unit is assigned a reviewer, whose role is to confirm the suitability of the assessment tasks described in the draft unit profile. The reviewer will work collaboratively with the Unit Coordinator to resolve any issues raised during the review process to ensure that assessments are well designed and their requirements are clearly explained to students.
- 3.6 The Unit Coordinator must confirm publication of the unit profile after all other checks have been completed, and 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)

- 3.7 [Moderation](#) of marks/grades may take place by either:
  - consensus moderation (sometimes termed 'social moderation') - involving all assessors in a unit, or
  - expert moderation - where the Unit Coordinator acts as moderator of marks/grades for all other markers.
- 3.8 Where moderation of marks/grades occurs through consensus moderation, all assessors, including the Unit Coordinator, will be involved in the moderation process. It is best conducted during the early stages of marking, where, following marking of the required sample (see [Consensus Moderation](#) section below) by individual assessors, moderation meeting/s occur to discuss and agree on the appropriate mark to be awarded against each assessment criteria. 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.
- 3.9 Alternatively, where moderation of marks/grades occurs through a process of expert moderation, the Unit Coordinator will act as the moderator for all other assessors in the unit, taking sole responsibility for confirming that appropriate marks/grades have been awarded. Unit Coordinators must:
  - contact teaching employees including tutors, assessors and lecturing employees associated with the unit to discuss details of assessment tasks, assessment criteria, marking and moderation procedures prior to the start of term or unit delivery where possible, or as soon as marking contracts are issued, and
  - 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, to facilitate moderation by the Unit Coordinator.
- 3.10 The Unit Coordinator must develop a moderation plan which sets parameters for moderating assessments in line with this procedure, including ensuring:
  - moderation is conducted by consensus or expert moderation
  - the moderation process does not significantly delay the provision of results and/or feedback to students
  - moderation occurs promptly following the assessment due (or submission) date, or receipt of examinations, and is conducted within the timeframes agreed between the Unit Coordinator and Deputy Dean Learning and Teaching (or equivalent). As a guide, it may take up to 10 working days to complete the moderation process and release results/feedback to students
  - agreed time frames are communicated to assessors in a timely manner
  - moderation considers potential academic integrity breaches in line with the [Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure](#) and sets out escalation processes

- assessors provide Unit Coordinators with sample copies of marked assessment items for moderation as requested, where assessments are not available online. Originals must remain secure, and
- students receive timely and constructive feedback on their assessment items, in line with the [Assessment Policy and Procedure \(Higher Education Coursework\)](#).

### **Consensus moderation**

- 3.11 Chosen by the Unit Coordinator, at least three samples of students' work are assessed, including work indicative of one passing assessment (50 – 55 per cent), one medium achievement assessment (70 – 75 per cent), and one high achievement assessment (>80 per cent) where possible.
- 3.12 The Unit Coordinator ensures that copies of sample assessments, assessment criteria, and any marking guidelines/standards rubrics are available to assessors for moderation marking.
- 3.11 Assessors mark the sample assessments within the agreed time frame and prior to scheduled moderation meeting/s.
- 3.13 A moderation meeting/s is convened by the Unit Coordinator, at which assessors share their judgments on the sample assessments to reach agreement about the marks/grades awarded against each of the assessment criteria, and for the overall assessment.
- 3.14 Once a shared understanding, or consensus, about marks/grades awarded to work of a particular standard has been reached, each assessor proceeds to mark their allocated quota of assessment items within the agreed time frames to enable the timely provision of results and/or feedback to students.
- 3.15 If there are new assessors involved in marking, additional support must be considered to ensure subsequent marking adheres to agreed standards.

### **Expert moderation**

- 3.16 Chosen by the Unit Coordinator, at least three samples of students' work from each assessor will be reviewed, including one passing assessment (50 – 55 per cent), one medium achievement assessment (70 – 75 per cent), and one high achievement assessment (>80 per cent), where possible. Where an assessor is new to marking for that assessment/unit, the moderated sample size may be increased up to five. Unit Coordinators may request up to 10 per cent of assessment items prior to the assessment due date if the unit has more than 50 students.
- 3.17 Grades are moderated, and feedback provided to assessors within the agreed time frame to enable the timely provision of results and/or feedback to students. The Unit Coordinator provides feedback and advises assessors directly of any required adjustments to their marking. This may necessitate the assessor adjusting previous marks awarded to conform to the moderated sample.
- 3.18 Once assessors have acted on moderation feedback and finalised marking, a list of all (final) assessment marks is provided to the Unit Coordinator. This must occur within the agreed time frames.
- 3.19 The Unit Coordinator will formally communicate the date of completion of moderation to assessors. No assessment items or results will be released to students until the Unit Coordinator has completed the moderation process for all assessments submitted by the due date as published in the unit profile.
- 3.20 Assessors must ensure that any component changes that constitute the moderated mark be made on the assessment item feedback before it is returned to students. They must also 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.

### **Consensus and expert moderation**

- 3.21 Marks/grades must only be released to students once the moderation process is complete (for all assessments submitted by the published due date), in line with the requirements of the [Assessment Policy and Procedure \(Higher Education Coursework\)](#).

- 3.22 Assessors must ensure that assessment items and examinations from their group are marked fairly and consistently when compared with others in the unit. This may require regular ongoing reciprocal communication with the Unit Coordinator.
- 3.23 Assessors must meet the timeframes for marking and moderation as agreed between the Unit Coordinator and Deputy Dean Learning and Teaching (or equivalent). 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 (Deputy Dean Learning and Teaching/Head of College, or nominee) must be advised by the Unit Coordinator.
- 3.24 Assessors, including the Unit Coordinator, must ensure that assessment items returned to students contain only one substantiated moderated mark, and that any adjustments to marks that have occurred because of the moderation process have been made prior to the return of work to students.
- 3.25 Unit Coordinators must maintain regular contact with assessors throughout unit delivery, during the moderation processes for each marked piece of assessment and as part of the moderation of overall results before presentation to the appropriate School or College Committee assessment meeting.
- 3.26 Unit Coordinators must prepare a report at the conclusion of each term, or as required for units under the hyperflexible delivery model, to confirm that appropriate moderation procedures have been followed during the unit, and to present unit assessment breakdowns, results, and grade distributions. These reports will be presented to the appropriate School or College Committee assessment meeting. If the Unit Coordinator does not attend the meeting, they must be readily contactable or have fully briefed the Dean of School/Head of College or proxy to answer unit result queries from the meeting.

## 4 RESPONSIBILITIES

### Compliance, monitoring and review

- 4.1 The Director Educational Quality and Integrity is responsible for monitoring, reviewing, and ensuring compliance with this procedure.
- 4.2 The Unit Coordinator is responsible for the academic leadership and oversight of all aspects of units allocated to them, including setting and reviewing assessment tasks, and the marking/grading, collation, moderation, submission of results and finalisation of grades.

### Reporting

- 4.3 No additional reporting is required.

### Records management

- 4.4 Employees must manage records relevant to administering this procedure in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping information system.
- 4.5 University records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the relevant [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#). Before disposing of any records, approval must be sought from the Records and Privacy Team (email [records@cqu.edu.au](mailto:records@cqu.edu.au)).

## 5 DEFINITIONS

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

### Terms and definitions

**Moderation:** a quality assurance process that ensures the appropriate quality of and valid and consistent judgement of student performance in:

- assessment tasks, and

- assessment outcomes.

## 6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

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

[Learning and Teaching Framework](#)

[Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure](#)

## 7 FEEDBACK

7.1 Feedback about this document can be emailed to [policy@cqu.edu.au](mailto:policy@cqu.edu.au).

## 8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Academic Board
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