Assessment Moderation guide

As discussed in the [Assessment Practice Procedures](#) (Section 4. Moderation) there are 3 points where moderation is required:

- Design (design of assessment tasks, instructions, weightings, timing and rubrics)
- Delivery of Assessments (including assessment items, feedback and grades)
- Final grades

This guide is designed to provide a snapshot of:

1. choosing a moderator
2. responsibilities regarding moderation
3. various aspects of assessment you may wish to consider when designing and or moderating them
4. other resources and [moderation related resources](#)

1. Choosing a moderator

Moderation should ideally occur as part of a collegial activity as assessments are designed, delivered and grades are finalised. It is possible to do this informally by asking a colleague (who has experience in assessment from either within or outside of a discipline) to check assessments are clear, consistent, fair and equitable. Where topics are larger more formal marking meetings or assessment discussions may be more appropriate.

2. Responsibilities regarding moderation

The [Assessment Practice Procedures](#) (Section 4. Moderation) outlines responsibilities related to moderation, indicating:

- College Deans (Education) are responsible for grade distribution and release of final topic grades across Courses
- Course coordinators/Teaching Program directors have responsibilities where programmatic assessment is a component of the course
- Topic coordinators are responsible for topic assessment design, delivery and grade submission.

Further guidance on moderation can be found in the [Good Practice Guide – Moderation](#).

3. Various aspects

3.1. Moderating Design

General considerations

Assessments should be designed to

- support academic integrity (see [Designing assessment to support academic integrity](#), tip sheet)
- support student learning in a positive manner
- support students to succeed in the assessment in the least complex manner
- be a valid representation of the taught and learned subject matter and not include elements that were outside of the goals of the topic or course
- be fair and equitable, assessments should not distinguish between students on any other factor than their command of the content and goals of the topic or course

If moderating Statement of Assessment Methods (SAMs) it is important to ensure these correspond to assessment policies (please refer to SAMS 2022 Update FAQs and Tip sheet – SAMs for 2022 (Link both docs)

Things you may wish to look for (where appropriate to the learning context):

Assessment is constructively aligned and reinforces learning in a positive way
- The learning outcomes and aims of the topic or course are constructively aligned with the assessments
- Assessments support what students to understand what they have learned by participating in the topic

Assessment appropriate for learning outcomes
- Assessment task supports achievement of topic learning outcomes and aims

Skills assessed are authentic & transferrable
- Assessments are at the highest possible level of authenticity, but balancing this with feasibility
- The skills/knowledge students are asked to demonstrate will transfer to further study or the workplace
- The assessment provides opportunities to demonstrate students' development of Flinders Graduate Qualities
- Assessment appropriately aligns with accreditation requirements

Requirements are clear & detailed
- Assessment requirements are explained in sufficient detail (through the assessment instructions and/or rubrics) so that markers and students can understand what is expected of them when marking/completing the assessment

Assessments are scaffolded
- Assessments are scaffolded, building skills as students move from the first topic assessment to the last. (e.g. progression through assessments is clear)

Clarity and fairness of weighting
- Assessments are pitched at the appropriate year (AQF) level for the topic
- Value/extent of learning is clearly reflected in the weighting of each assessment
- The weighting of individual assessments is balanced to reflect fair and equitable effort

Workload and timing
- Assessment is not overburdensome for markers or students
- Assessment is appropriately weighted for time on task
- Assessments are timed to allow students sufficient opportunity to:
  - understand content before they are assessed
  - receive and incorporate feedback from previous assessment
  - reflect on learnings before moving to next assessment

Rubric is provided
- The rubric provides sufficient information and detail for markers and students to determine how a particular grade may be achieved

- The rubric acts as a tool to guide markers and students in determining how criteria are weighted.

Further information about moderating assessment design is available from the [Moderating assessment design](#) tip sheet. The [Designing assessment](#) tip sheet, the [Good Practice Guide: Assessment principles](#) and/or the [Assessment Policy](#) may also be a useful references.

3.2. Moderating Delivery (Grading and feedback)

General considerations

Grading and feedback should
- support student learning (not confusing issues for the student, provide insight into why students received their grade as simply as possible)
- be fair and equitable (students are provided with the grade they deserve for the work they have completed)

Things you may wish to look for (where appropriate to the learning context):

The grade is appropriate
- The grade represents the student's level of performance across all elements of the descriptor (as indicated in Grading Scheme).

Learning outcomes addressed
- Grade appropriately reflects degree to which student has addressed relevant learning outcomes

Feedback is focused on learning

The feedback provided to the student
- will help them improve future work
- indicates both strengths and weaknesses
- provides encouragement
- supports opportunities to further develop skills and knowledge in the area being assessed

Feedback is useful
- The feedback is signposted, so students are aware of what aspect of the assessment (and or which learning outcomes) are being discussed
- The language used is jargon free and comments or annotations are clear
- Where comments are included, they are explained in context of the assessment and/or learning outcomes

The rubrics
- The rubric clearly indicates how well the student responded to the assessment requirements
- Students will gain insight into how well they addressed the learning outcomes from the rubric

Further information about moderating grading and feedback is available from the [Moderating grading and feedback](#) tip sheet. The [Good Practice Guide: Feedback](#) and/or the [Assessment Policy](#) may also be a useful references.

3.3. Moderating Final Grades

General considerations

Final grades should

- support student learning (grades reflect students' capacity to address learning outcomes and the quality of their responses)
- be fair and equitable (reflective of student effort in responding to assessment requirements)
- the timing of moderation of final grades is important and should occur before grades are published (ideally as part of the finalisation of grades process)

When moderating final grades, the moderator and the marker need to agree how the process will occur. Ideally the moderator will be provided with an example of the learning outcomes and assessment as well as a sample of grades achieved across the student cohort. The sample may include:
- a percentage sample from across all grades
- only HDs and fails
- other sample agreed by moderator and topic coordinator

Things you may wish to look for (where appropriate to the learning context):
The final grade appropriately aligns with the Grading scheme
- and is reflective of the accumulation of all grades for assessments across the topic.
- Grade awarded appropriately aligns with conventions and practices of the discipline.

Learning outcomes addressed
- Grade appropriately reflects degree to which student has addressed all of the topic learning outcomes.

4. Other resources

Further information about moderating grading and feedback is available from the Moderating grading and feedback tip sheet and moderation related resources. The Assessment Policy may also be a useful reference.

Where a disagreement or issue results from Moderation these should be referred to parties outlined as responsible or College Dean (Education).

External resources used to develop this guide
Innovative Research Universities. IRU Academic Calibration Process, External Reviewer report –
Guidance Notes. Retrieved from https://www.iru.edu.au/iru-work/calibration/
Quality Assurance and Enhancement. (2020). University of Suffolk, Student assessment: An overview.
Retrieved from https://www.uos.ac.uk/sites/default/files/assessment-overview.pdf