

Moderation of Assessment Policy

Policy Code: ACA-008

Version: 12.0

Effective Date: 08 June 2023

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the College's approach to moderation of assessment to ensure consistency in the evaluation of student grades.

Scope

- All campuses (including online)
- All higher education courses
- All academic staff and contractors
- All academic governing bodies

Policy Statement

Moderation is a quality assurance process that ensures assessment is continuously monitored to ensure that students' work is assessed with fairness, accuracy and consistency. Moderation is undertaken to enable a reasonable level of assurance that assessment activities have been designed and implemented appropriately so that students and staff can be confident that the results provided are fair, valid and reliable. It enables evaluation of consistency in the standard of marking applied to assessment pieces regardless of place of delivery, mode of delivery or the assessor. The College has processes in place to assure both the quality of the assessment process, and to support the continuous improvement of assessment of subjects in its courses.

Background Principles

Moderation will be applied to all assessments in all subjects.

Effective moderation requires that:

- the objective of the assessment component and the criteria on which marks will be awarded are explicit and well justified, and are well explained to both students and markers;
- all subjects are taught and assessed according to the Subject Outline and there is consistency in marking across all campuses and cohorts;
- clear, well-understood marking guides are used; and
- there is a mutually agreed and timely process of feedback to ensure that corrections to marking strategies can be appropriately applied. Under these circumstances, it is possible to analyse how significant inconsistencies or deviations from a standard arise, and to correct errors before students are misled about their performance through inappropriate, inadequate or missing feedback.

Responsibility for Moderation

Ultimate responsibility for ensuring that moderation occurs lies with the Director of Education who has the primary responsibility for monitoring the quality of student academic performance within the College. Subject Administrators, in collaboration with the relevant Heads of Department, will be responsible for implementing the moderation process

and recording outcomes. Heads of Department will report findings within the Examiner's Report of the relevant department.

Moderation Process

The moderation process consists of 4 phases:

1. Pre-delivery moderation (assessment design)
2. Pre-assessment moderation
3. Post-marking moderation
4. Review and reflection

Pre-delivery moderation (Assessment design)

Pre-delivery moderation occurs during development of the Subject Outline and development of individual assessment tasks. All assessment tasks must be reviewed by the subject teaching team prior to publication to students. In this phase staff should pay attention to the design of the assessment task to ensure constructive alignment between assessment and subject Learning Outcomes and that for each criterion in the marking rubric that there are clearly understandable performance standards. Assessment tasks should be written in plain English and any presentation or other requirements are clearly described. Assessment design should also minimise the likelihood of academic misconduct, for example ensuring assignments encourage analysis rather than simple recall.

Pre-assessment moderation

The Subject Administrator is responsible for ensuring that all markers are familiar with the assessment task requirements and marking criteria prior to any marking taking place. This would normally include holding a meeting with markers to discuss the marking criteria, clarify any areas of interpretation and may include sample marking of an item.

Post-marking moderation

After marking has been completed, but prior to release of marks to students, the marks for all assessment items will be subject to review to ensure there are no obvious anomalies. This will include comparison of distribution of marks for different markers and analysis of the overall marks to look for abnormal distributions or clustering of marks. Variance between markers should be minimal; typically, there should be no less than 5% variance between markers.

For one assessment item in each subject a more detailed review of marks must be undertaken. This involves review of a minimum of 5 items or 10%, whichever is greater. These items should represent examples of work from those awarded marks from the top grades, mid-range grades and borderline pass / fail grade categories. These items should be blind marked (i.e. the new marker should not know the original mark). The person/s selected for this role must have relevant academic expertise to the extent that they are competent to detect errors, discrepancies or ineptitude in the marking process of a particular subject.

To ensure all assessment tasks are moderation on a rolling cycle, the same item can only be moderated twice before a new item must be moderated in the next offering.

Where there are no discrepancies found during moderation, or discrepancies represent less than 5% of the item value, marks are to be released to students as soon as practical and no more than 15 working days following the submission date for work submitted on time.

Where discrepancies of greater than 5% are found during the moderation process the Subject Administrator will inform the Head of Department who will consult with the Director of Education as to the appropriate response. No student's mark will be changed as a result of moderation without consideration of whether the identified issue also applies to other student's marked by the same marker.

Review and reflection

At the end of each teaching period teaching staff are required to review on the performance of the subject including consideration of student subject feedback, moderation results and other data as applicable (e.g. staff feedback). The outcome of this review and reflection should inform future offering of the subject and is to be documented in the Head of Department Examiner's Committee report.

Moderation Responsibilities

Heads of Department and the Subject Administrator have operational responsibility for internal moderation, unless the Subject Administrator is the sole teacher and marker of the subject; in which case another moderator will be appointed by the Head of Department. Moderators must be experienced academics with content knowledge of the appropriate field and may be appointed from within the department or outside it.

Moderation may be an individual or a collective process, but the Subject Administrator or appointed moderator/s for each subject must sign off the outcome of the moderation process for that subject and marks must not be released prior to moderation being completed. The *Moderation of Assessment Procedure – Higher Education* outlines in detail how the assessment process is conducted at the College.

Examiners' Committee – Higher Education

The Examiners' Committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring all higher education results and will be provided with a report of grades from the relevant Heads of Department for every subject offered in any given teaching period. The Examiners' Committee will meet to discuss issues and possible cases of concern prior to grades being released. It will then meet again after grade release to moderate grade distributions across campuses, and to suggest any changes to subjects or assessments based on issues arising out of moderation. The Examiners' Committee will provide a report on its moderation findings to the Academic Board.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is an important quality assurance mechanism and involves measuring the College metrics and practices against external partners. Academic benchmarking may be at a subject or course level and is overseen by the Director of Education and Head of Teaching and Learning.

The Director of Education and Head of Teaching and Learning, in consultation with the Heads of Department, will develop a schedule of benchmarking activities. This schedule will be reviewed each year and the results of benchmarking activities reported to Education Board annually.

Definitions

Blind marking – moderation process where the second marker does not see the first markers results during marking.

College – The Australian College of Natural Medicine Pty Ltd (ACNM) trades as Endeavour College of Natural Health and Endeavour Wellness Clinic. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to 'College' or 'the College' should be considered a reference to each or any of these respective trading names / entities.

Student – is an individual person who is formally enrolled to study at the College. The individual person is that who appears on the College's documents such as enrolment, admission and payment documents, and who is assigned an individual student ID.

Related Procedures

Moderation of Assessment Procedure – Higher Education

Further Information

Related Policies

Assessment Policy - Higher Education

Related Documents

Nil

Guidelines

Nil

Benchmarking

ACPE

James Cook University

Supporting Research and Analysis

Not Applicable

Related Legislation

Not Applicable



Review and Approval

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Recommending Body

Education Board

Meeting date: 6 May 2021

Approval Body

Academic Council

Meeting date: 28 May 2021

Policy Status

Revised – full review for currency, no content changes made

Responsibilities for Implementation

- Director of Education
- Head of Teaching and Learning
- Heads of Department
- Subject Administrators

Key Stakeholders

- Academic Council
- Academic staff
- Education Board
- Examiners' Committee
- Students