



MODERATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1 PURPOSE

Top Education Institute (TOP) is committed to striving for the highest level of academic standards. The processes of moderation outlined in this policy are part of the broader process achieving academic excellence and ensuring that standards of student learning and assessment of learning outcomes are consistent with the level set out by the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF). Review and moderation of units, unit outlines, assessment tasks, marking and grading leads to consistency and helps ensure that criteria remain aligned to the course and unit learning outcomes. TOP employs a systems-based approach of moderating to help pre-empt problems and facilitate continuous improvement in all aspects of unit design and delivery. This also helps promote fair, consistent and transparent practices, and staff compliance with moderation strategies.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all academic staff, including full-time, part-time and sessional staff.

3 DEFINITIONS

Moderation is an essential part of the academic quality assurance process that facilitates consistency and reliability in the assessment of student learning and performance. Typically, it takes the form of a review of any or all of the following: units; unit outlines; assessment tasks; examination papers; and examination scripts.

Internal moderators are academic colleagues from TOP with experience and expertise in the subject area but not involved directly in the writing of the unit or assessment setting and/or marking process of the unit being moderated.

External moderators are academic staff from other higher education providers or professionals with expertise in the subject area who can provide independent review and moderation of the unit or assessment processes, where the internal moderation process indicates that there are substantial problems in the design or delivery of a unit.

4 PROCEDURES

Minimum standards and frequency of moderation

- 4.1 As a minimum, moderation must ensure that learning content and assessment complies with AQF standards deemed appropriate for the level of award offered on completion of the course. Moderation helps assure that academic staff apply practices that are consistent with TOP goals to provide fair, reliable and clearly defined assessment processes that reflect course and unit learning outcomes. For each unit, internal moderation will be performed at least once a year. The nature of the moderation will vary from unit to unit as appropriate.

Two phases of moderation

To help ensure the quality of courses and the achievement of learning outcomes, moderation is considered to be an ongoing process. Consequently, there are two key phases to the moderation process - pre-delivery and post-delivery

- 4.2 **Pre-delivery moderation** involves review and moderation of the unit, including all learning resources, presentation materials and assessment plan before unit delivery. At this stage of moderation, recommendations from previous moderation activity are reviewed and incorporated. As well as ensuring the fairness and validity of the assessment of units, moderation promotes academic standards that are consistent with those of other units of the course and commensurate with the level of award being offered.
- 4.3 **Post-delivery moderation** is an essential phase of moderation that leads to the ongoing improvement of units offered by TOP. During this phase of moderation, unit delivery and assessment are examined, and staff reflect on the effectiveness of the unit in meeting unit and course learning outcomes. Recommendations for future improvements help ensure that courses and units retain their professional relevance and academic rigour.

STRATEGIES

- 4.4 **Internal moderation** is carried out by TOP academic staff who have expertise in the discipline area. The internal moderators are usually senior staff appointed by the Dean. The internal moderators check the consistency of learning outcomes and assure that assessment is a reliable and valid reflection of student learning. Moderation must be independent and cannot be completed by staff directly involved in the teaching of the same unit. Broad principles that will be employed in the internal moderation process area as follows:

- All unit and unit outlines will be moderated at least once over a two-year rolling cycle. The moderation will normally be conducted in conjunction with a review of the primary course in which the unit is placed and consider quality matters, including assessments with respect to the AQF and the assessment of Unit Learning Outcomes.
- Every unit will have its exam papers moderated at least once a year.
- Every examiner/marker will have a sample of their marking/grading checked for consistency at least once per year. (Refer Appendix for further details)
- Consideration will be given to the comparability of the unit grade distributions within and across courses.

4.5 External moderation External moderators are experts in the field of study who are independent of TOP. They may be appointed by the Dean where the internal moderation process indicates a major shortcoming in a unit or any aspect of its assessment. Where an external moderation has taken place, a formal report will be presented to TOP's Teaching and Learning Committee with recommendations for improvements.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND REPORTING

4.6 All academic staff at TOP have a responsibility to be aware of and possibly involved in the moderation processes. Academic staff must be familiar with the (related) Assessment Policy and Procedures (Coursework) and comply with quality assurance practices. It is the responsibility of the Dean or the Dean's delegate to sign off on the results of moderation and to suggest further action and investigation if moderation reveals significant discrepancies. The Dean is also responsible for the appointment of internal and external moderators as well as the coordination of any action required from moderation results.

A summary of moderation findings is reported to the Teaching and Learning Committee before any formal Unit and Course Review. This will assist the Teaching and Learning Committee in overseeing the effectiveness of moderation procedures and make the best use of results in determining the development of curriculum and accreditation.

5 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- i. Assessment Policy and Procedures (Coursework)
- ii. Academic Quality Assurance Framework
- iii. Course and Unit Review Policy
- iv. Examination Policy and Procedures

6 Version Control

Historical Version	Approved by	Approval Date
2016.8	Academic Board	16 August 2016

APPENDIX

Process for internal moderation of examination scripts:

- (a) Academic Administration officers randomly select a 10% sample of examination scripts, including scripts from each grade and focus on examination scripts that are near the pass/fail margin for moderators to review.
- (b) Where there are less than 50 examination scripts, Academic Administration officers randomly select at least 5 examination scripts, drawn from each grade, for moderators to review.
- (c) The moderator will check for consistency of marking and compliance with marking guides and rubrics.
- (d) If a moderator detects any issues that appear to be systemic during the examination script moderation process, the moderator will require a further sample of scripts be moderated, based on the issues identified. In some cases, this may require all examination scripts to be remarked.