



Policy on the Moderation of Assessment

Since September 2011, the University has permitted diversity in form of assessment across multi-location/mode programmes and does not require the same assessment to be in place, provided that the same learning outcomes are assessed and the same level of quality and standards are maintained (see [Learning and Teaching Briefing Papers](#)). Alongside this principle, it is imperative for the University to assure itself of the maintenance of academic standards, consistency, comparability and fairness to students across the wide variety of its taught provision.

Moderation is one of the key principles for assuring quality and standards across multiple variants of a programme. The University has long-established processes for external moderation of assessment through its external examining system (including the role of Chief External Examiners). See the [External Examining Handbook](#) for full details of the role of the External Examiner in moderation (including review of assessment prior to distribution to students and following completion by students).

In addition to its external moderation, the University needs to ensure that robust, effective and consistent internal moderation processes are taking place in all disciplines, across all Schools and in all modes or locations of study.

This policy covers the two sequential stages of internal moderation:

- 1) The process of reviewing assessments during drafting and setting stage, ie before these are issued to students;
- 2) The process of reviewing assessments following completion by students.

The term “moderation” is used throughout this policy to cover both stages. Where there is a need to differentiate, the process for considering assessments at the design stage prior to being issued to students is referred to as “internal review of assessments”

The University Policy on Moderation of Assessment applies to all qualifying assessments, and includes review and scrutiny of assessments before distribution to, and after completion by, students, but may be extended by Schools to non-qualifying assessment.

An accompanying *Guide for Schools on the Moderation of Assessment* has been provided to assist Schools in producing or revising their own moderation policies.

Aim of Policy

The purpose of moderation, and hence the aim of this Policy, is:

To assure the University that the standard of student learning required to achieve a specific grade, credit or award is consistent as far as possible across each discipline and is fair to all students.

Implementation: University and Schools

The University Policy was implemented with effect from the start of academic year 2013/2014. Schools had their moderation policies in place by the start of 2013/14, with a copy being submitted to the Clerk of the Quality and Standards Committee by end of September 2013.

Adherence to Policy

The University Policy is designed to provide a framework which is sufficiently flexible to enable Schools to continue with, and build on where appropriate, their current well-established moderation processes.

The requirements set out in this Policy are a minimum level of acceptable practice, which all Schools must meet.

Review of University Policy and School Policies

The University Policy on Moderation shall be reviewed every three years by the -University Committee for Learning and Teaching¹.

School policies on moderation shall be reviewed on a 3-year cycle through the Academic Audit as part of the review of internal management processes.

Key Principle

Schools must have a formal moderation policy which sets out the School's procedures and responsibilities, and must retain records showing that moderation has occurred. These records (and the policy and its implementation) shall be reported on by the External Examiner each year and shall be reviewed by the Academic Audit team every three years.

All Schools must have robust moderation processes to ensure that there is equivalence between assessment activities on any given course. This should include equivalence: over time; between different authors; across different activities that may be used in different locations; between different graders/markers; between different languages.

School moderation processes must ensure that assessments are robust and at a level appropriate to the learning outcomes being assessed. Moderation must include review and scrutiny of assessments at the setting and drafting stage, ie prior to distribution to students, as well as completed assessments.

Scope

The scope of the University Policy and associated School moderation procedures encompasses:

1. All qualifying assessments which contribute to the degree awards associated with a programme:
 - All forms and variants of summative assessment, ie those which contribute to the overall mark/grade and award of credit, irrespective of mode or location of delivery of a programme.
 - All stages of the assessment process, from design of, and criteria for, assignments to the final marking and confirmation of results.
2. Stage Three assessments of programmes from which substantial numbers of students exit with an Ordinary degree.

Schools may opt to apply moderation processes to assessments associated with non-qualifying courses.

¹ In practice, the University Committee for Learning and Teaching is likely to devolve responsibility for undertaking this review to the Student Learning Experience Committee.

Template for School Moderation Procedures

A template for School moderation procedures has been outlined below. The accompanying *Guide for Schools on the Moderation of Assessment* provides more detailed information. Both are designed to assist Schools in reviewing, and revising as appropriate, their own processes in order to meet the requirements of the University Policy.

Schools may differentiate their moderation processes to take account of the extent to which there is a potential risk to consistency of quality and standards, and equity of treatment of students in assessment.

1. School Policy Statement

Schools must have a formal (written) moderation policy which sets out how the School will ensure consistency and maintenance of academic standards, and, where appropriate, equivalency across multiple versions of programmes.

The School moderation policy should make explicit the process for approving, reviewing and modifying the policy and associated procedures.

2. Scope of School Moderation

School moderation policies should set out the range of activities subject to moderation (eg, review at the design and marking stages; double-marking of dissertations; review across different modes/locations; overview of marking by Approved Teachers/Tutors/Markers). See *Guide for Schools on the Moderation of Assessment* for further examples of activities requiring moderation.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

A summary should be given of the individuals and groups responsible for the various moderation activities and of their respective responsibilities. It is recommended that each discipline (or School, depending on the size and scope of the School's activity) has a "Moderator" who oversees the implementation of the School's moderation policy.

The roles and responsibilities should include how the School:

- reviews the appropriateness of assessments at the design stage;
- resolves differences between individuals in their marking of assessments;
- oversees the moderation processes;
- ensures the independence of individuals involved in moderation.

In the *Guide for Schools on the Moderation of Assessment*, a suggested remit is given for: Moderator; External Examiner; Chief External Examiner; Boards of Examiners.

4. Reporting Procedure

The reporting and formal record-keeping procedure should be outlined, for example: the Moderator's Report to the relevant Board of Examiners²; statement of the effectiveness of the moderation process in the minutes of the relevant Board of Examiners; judgement of the Chief External Examiner in his/her Report to the University.

² The remits and roles of the three types of Boards of Examiners – Course Assessment Board, Progression Board and Award Board – are defined in Regulation A5: Academic Decision Making Boards.

5. Communication of School Process

The mechanisms by which the School communicates its moderation process to all staff, Externals and students should be included. The School process must be transparent and clear.

Academic Quality
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