# Improving Moderation Processes

This Project interprets moderation of assessment more broadly than just a quality control measure around marking work. This is because marking alone and reviewing allocated grades does not guarantee quality assessment. This Project sees moderation as processes and activities that occur before assessment is implemented (i.e. quality assurance), as well as those that occur after assessment is undertaken by students (i.e. quality control).

This resource provides actions you can take to improve moderation processes in your teaching team.

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*Our research indicates that it appears rare for the assessment regime to be negotiated between Australian and transnational academics.*

*Highly qualified transnational academics can feel demeaned by post-hoc marking and the lesser role in the power relationship. Academics in the teaching team need to negotiate their roles and accountabilities in this situation.*

## Moderation Process Challenges

Moderation processes occur in compressed time frame with pressure to get feedback to students or to submit grades to Boards of Examiners. A number of the moderation processes are essentially 'post' processes and the most extreme version is the post-hoc lowering of marks after grades are submitted.

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## Moderation Process Phases

The project proposes viewing moderation as having three phases with non-linear feedback loops:

- assessment design and development
- implementation, marking and grading
- review and evaluation.

The design and development phase consists of activities that take place in the development of the assessment task to ensure that it is valid and fair. Design and development is part of quality assurance.

Figure 1 illustrates the three phases of moderation.
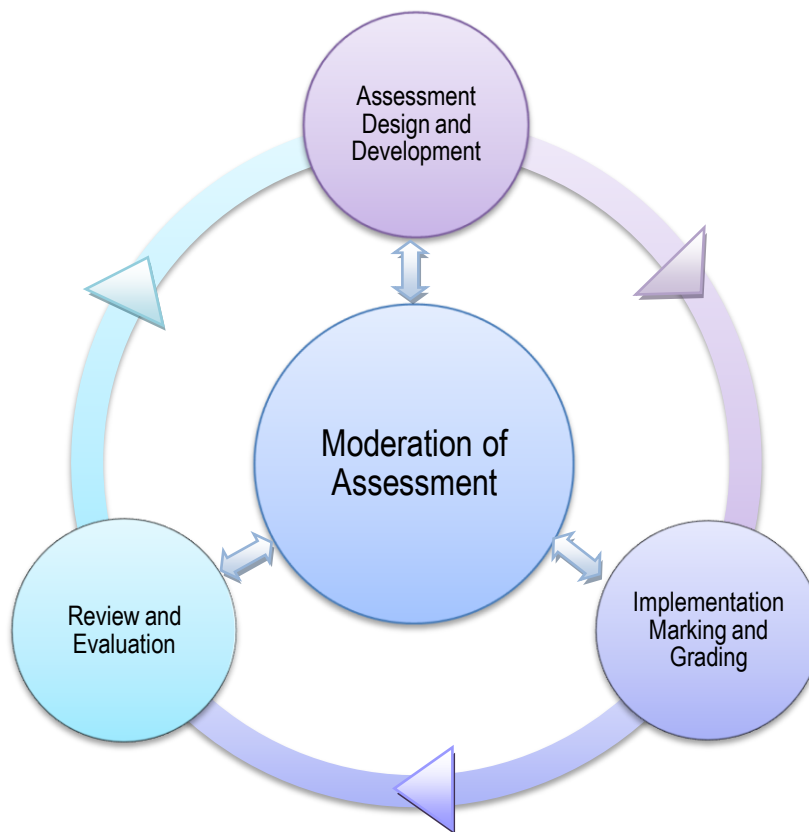
**Figure 1: Phases in Moderation of Assessment**

The actions below can assist you in improving moderation processes:

## Improvements in Design and Development

- Have teaching team approach
- Meet each other face-to-face
- Co-develop assessment items and model answers
- Negotiate curriculum, consider local contexts
- Develop expectation of formative feedback as well as summative assessment where appropriate.
- Use marking criteria and  marking guides well ahead of time
- Use exemplars from previous assessments
- Use technology assisted communication e.g. Skype

## Improvements in Implementation, Marking and Grading

- Cross mark a selection of assignments
- Discuss standards
- Mark each other's students
- Give individual, formative feedback, where appropriate to subject and student performance
- Give general feedback to all students in unit

## Improvements in Review and Evaluation

- Debrief directly after marking and moderation.
- Unit Manager completes moderation report, which is read by teaching team members who add comments
- Unit Report is compiled containing summary of moderation report, meaningful student evaluations of subject, teaching team comments and data regarding grade distribution, withdrawals etc and analysis of marking across the unit.
- Unit Report is used by teaching team for revision of subject content and assessment for its next iteration (closing the loop).
- Discuss variations in marking in cohort groups
- Seek peer feedback from the teaching team on performance of subject co-ordinator.
- Avoid post-hoc adjustment of marks/grades

## General Improvements in Moderation

- Provide staff development for Australian and transnational staff
- Fund research and evaluation projects on moderation inclusive of transnational staff perspectives
- Develop technology to assist moderation processes
- Train Australian and transnational staff in use of related technology