

Reviewing Moderation Procedures

Moderation of assessment encompasses both actions prior to marking assessment tasks (quality assurance) as well as post hoc procedures for minimising the impact of unsuccessful management practices (quality control). Moderation involves any process which aims to ensure that the assessment program for a unit, program or course meets quality criteria, that alternate forms of assessment delivered in different locations are equivalent, that marking procedures and grading decisions are of a consistent and equitable standard (across markers, locations, and year groups) and do not inadvertently bias sub-cohorts of students (e.g. onshore/offshore, NESB/non-NESB, international/domestic, male/female).

Phases in Moderation of Assessment

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

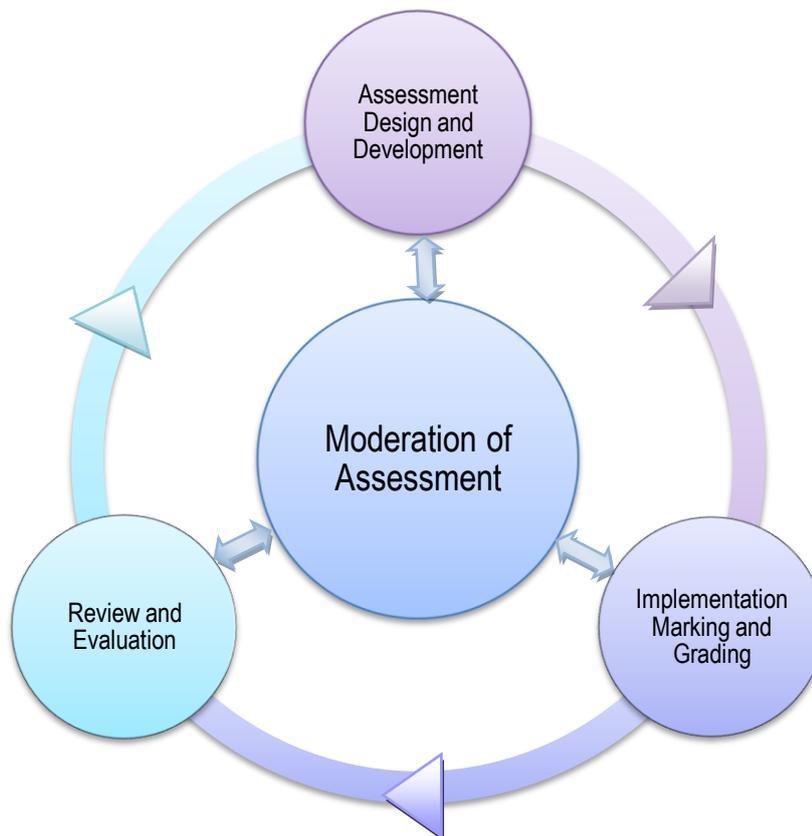


Figure 1: Phases in Moderation of Assessment

- 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.

The following questions can assist you in reviewing moderation of assessment procedures:

1. Assessment design (Phase 1)
 - a. What form of assessment is most appropriate for assessing specific unit learning outcomes?
 - b. Are examinations of same length & level of difficulty as in previous years? How can this be achieved? How is it monitored?
 - c. What standards are expected for a passing grade—for an assessment? For the unit?
 - d. Does any assessment task advantage one particular subgroup of students? Can you justify this?
2. Communication (Phase 1)
 - a. Is feedback sought from others (staff, students, industry) about assessment design and expectations for student performance?
 - b. How is the best way to involve the teaching team in developing or agreeing marking keys prior to students undertaking assessment?
 - c. Can you produce a scoring rubric so that students understand what is expected of them?
 - d. Have students been informed about the processes in place to ensure fairness through moderation?
3. Marking (Phase 2)
 - a. Do all markers know how to ensure that their own marking is consistent over time and different papers? Have they checked?
 - b. Do you undertake consensus moderation: to ensure that all markers understand and can implement a marking key faithfully and comparably.
 - c. What strategies will you employ to ensure consistent, reliable, accurate marking: second marking, double blind marking, share marking, external marking?
4. Analysis of results (Phase 2)
 - a. Do you compare marks for subgroups of students to check for inadvertent bias?
 - b. Do you undertake statistical analysis of assessors' marks to check for systematic errors?
 - c. Do you provide feedback for assessors/students about the fairness of the assessment task and marking?
5. Review and feedback (Phase 3)
 - a. How do you review the whole assessment task (does it perform as expected? as necessary?). Are markers required to provide feedback?
 - b. What improvements are needed? How can they be implemented?
 - c. Is student work returned with a clear mark and/or grade and clear indications as to how they can improve?
 - d. Is student work returned in time for students to apply what they have learned in subsequent tasks?