

Using sampling effectively

Sampling involves selecting a small number of items from a larger group to make judgements about the larger group to save time and cost. In the transnational context, the Australian academics generally call for samples of work that have been marked by transnational partner staff to see if they have been consistently assessed at the appropriate standard.

Research findings of selecting samples

Our research found sampling in TNE moderation includes:

- Dividing the work into groups or 'strata' such as top/middle/bottom or by grades such as High Distinction/Distinction/Credit/Pass/Fail. Then selecting a certain number of items such as two, three or five scripts from each group to form a sample.
- Selecting a sample as a set percentage of the total scripts for example 5%, 10% or 20%. With a set percentage, a minimum number of scripts (5-10) may be included in the sample. Fails are usually included in the sample.
- The sample selected in point 1 and 2 above can be on random basis i.e. each script has an equal chance of being selected.
- Some institutions have a policy on how samples are selected.
- In one Australian institution samples of work were taken based on scrutiny of statistical data of Australian and transnational partner results such as comparison of the average, standard deviation, the maximum and minimum, and the number of fails.

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“(We) send five per cent of marked assignments to Australia as per the policy. The Unit Coordinator corrects, we usually have to regrade. We send good, medium and weak assignments.”

Transnational partner academic

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- Bloxham and Boyd (2007, p. 119) consider a representative sample as the square root of the cohort - minimum of 5 papers) plus all fails. For instance, if there were 100 papers and five fail grades amongst them, the sample would be 10 plus the five fails.
- Avoid the premise that Australian grades are the 'gold standard' when trying to determine the degree of fairness of marking by transnational partner academics.
- Challenge the assumption that Australian and transnational cohorts are homogenous and that grading distributions will or should be mirror images of one another.
- Consider second marking the sample without knowledge of first marker's grades to increase rigour.

Reference:

Bloxham, S. & Boyd, P. (2007). *Developing effective assessment in higher education: a practical guide*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.