

Moderation of Assessment Policy

Policy Code: ACA-008

Version: 5.0

Effective Date: 25 October 2010

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the College's approach to moderation of assessment to ensure consistency in the evaluation of student grades.

Definition of "College" – In the higher education sector, Australian College of Natural Medicine Pty Ltd trades as Endeavour College of Natural Health (Endeavour) and Wellnation. For the purpose of this Policy, any reference to 'College' or 'the College' should be considered a reference to each or any of these respective entities or trading names.

Scope

- All campuses (including online)
- All higher education courses
- All academic staff and contractors
- All academic governing bodies

Policy Statement

Moderation is a quality assurance process that ensures that every student receives fair treatment and effective moderation of assessment is fundamental to the ongoing development of academic quality. Moderation is undertaken to enable a reasonable level of assurance that assessment activities have been designed and implemented appropriately so that students and staff can be confident that the results provided are fair, valid and reliable. It enables evaluation of consistency in the standard of marking applied to assessment pieces regardless of place of delivery, mode of delivery or the assessor. Moderation also ensures that the assessment design follows best practice models. The College has processes in place to assure both the quality of the assessment process, and to support the continuous improvement of assessment of subjects in its courses.

Background Principles

Moderation will be applied to nominated assessments in all subjects.

Effective moderation requires that:

- the objective of the assessment component and the criteria on which marks will be awarded are explicit and well justified, and are well explained to both students and markers
- all subjects are taught and assessed according to the Subject Outline and there is consistency in marking across all campuses
- clear, well-understood marking guides are used; and

- there is a mutually agreed and timely process of feedback to ensure that corrections to marking strategies can be appropriately applied. Under these circumstances, it is possible to analyse how significant inconsistencies or deviations from a standard arise, and to correct errors before students are misled about their performance through inappropriate, inadequate or missing feedback.

Responsibility for Moderation

Ultimate responsibility for ensuring that moderation occurs lies with the Director of Education who has the primary responsibility for monitoring the quality of student academic performance within the College. Subject Coordinators, in collaboration with the relevant Heads of Department / Associate Heads of Department / Course Coordinator, will identify assessments within subjects for moderation and will be responsible to implement and record outcomes of the moderation process using the [Subject Moderation Recording Tool](#) and Heads of Department / Associate Heads of Department / Course Coordinator will report findings within the Examiner's Report of the relevant department.

Internal Moderation Process

The internal moderation process must involve a person/s other than the original marker. The person/s selected for this role must have relevant academic expertise to the extent that they are competent to detect errors, discrepancies or ineptitude in the marking process of a particular subject.

Internal moderation of assessment will be undertaken for all subjects. Reliability and validity of moderation may take the form of pre and post assessment. Pre-assessment internal moderation occurs both before the assessment is undertaken by students and may include moderation of content or assessment design. In addition, pre-assessment internal moderation may consist of moderator marking a small sample of submitted assessments for each marker as a training activity prior to marking commencement. Post assessment moderation occurs after assessment is undertaken (but before grades are released) and may include exchange marking, double marking and blind marking. The sample for moderation can focus on grade bands or selected assessment items. The sample for grade band moderation should consist of a selection of top grades, mid-range grades and borderline pass / fail grades, while blind moderation should consist of a random 20% selection of identified assessment. The process of moderation can include the adjustment of student marks if recommended by the Examiners Committee through the internal moderation process. As part of the moderation process, adjustments to student marks will occur before the marks have been released to the student.

Heads of Department / Associate Head of Department / Course Coordinators and the Subject Coordinator have operational responsibility for internal moderation, unless the Subject Coordinator is the sole teacher and marker of the subject; in which case another moderator will be appointed by the Head of Department / Associate Head of Department / Course Coordinators. Moderators must be academics with content knowledge of the appropriate field and may be appointed from within the department or outside it.

Heads of Department / Associate Heads of Department / Course Coordinators will ensure that the Subject Coordinators or appointed moderator/s review and report on the results, and monitor the assessment performance of subjects.

Moderation may be an individual or a collective process, but the Subject Coordinators or appointed moderator/s for each subject must sign off the outcome of the moderation process for that subject on the [Subject Assessment Moderation Recording Tool](#) prior to the Examiners' Committee meeting. Where major differences emerge in moderation the Head of Department / Associate Head of Department / Course Coordinator will determine strategies to resolve the final grade. This may include involvement of an

external moderator. All irreconcilable moderation matters should be referred to the Director of Education. It is the responsibility of the Heads of Department / Associate Heads of Department / Course Coordinators and the Director of Education to act on assessment moderation results.

Where there is a single assessor for a subject, the relevant Head of Department / Associate Head of Department / Course Coordinator will appoint a moderator for that subject, in consultation with the Subject Coordinator, who will then take the appropriate following actions:

- All moderators are provided with assessment guides that include the explicit assessment criteria provided in the Subject Outline.
- Assessment tasks weighted more than 25% of the final grade must be checked for consistency by re-assessment by the appointed moderator of the work of a sample of students. This sample must include the full range of grades awarded.
- Where a sample is re-assessed, any suggested changes to marks on the basis of this re-assessment should be discussed first with the Heads of Department / Associate Heads of Department / Course Coordinators, who will make recommendations to the Examiners' Committee.

Where more than one assessor is used, the relevant Head of Department / Associate Head of Department / Course Coordinator will additionally ensure that:

- Marking of assessment is allocated so that, as far as possible, the same assessor marks all responses to a particular question or sub-task, to ensure consistency of moderation.

The [Moderation of Assessment Procedure – Higher Education](#) outlines in detail how the assessment process is conducted at the College.

External Moderation Process

The Director of Education will appoint an external moderator for each academic Department who will moderate a sample of assessment for at least two subjects or two (2) assessments from the same subject from that Department per semester (across all campuses). The subjects / assessments chosen for moderation are rotated (different every semester) so that all subjects are moderated externally at least once per accreditation cycle.

For each subject undergoing external moderation, the moderator will be provided with:

- A copy of all assessment items submitted by a sample of students. This sample must include the full range of grades awarded across all campuses at which the subject was delivered.
- Subject Outlines for the subjects chosen for moderation.
- Assessment guides that include the explicit assessment criteria provided in the Subject Outline OR complete examination paper (including all instructions and associated materials such as solutions and marking rubrics).

External moderation is undertaken at the end of each semester after grades are released. Therefore, due to the timing of external moderation, no changes may be made to marks through this process.

External moderators should not be provided with the original assessment items, rather a direct photocopy, to ensure all original records are kept at the College. Prior to appointment, each external moderator must sign an agreement to destroy all copies of student work once moderation for that subject is complete, and to keep all information confidential.

External moderators will document the moderation process on the [Subject Assessment Moderation Recording Tool](#), to be provided to the Director of Education for inclusion in the Examiners' Report, to

include any issues arising out of the process, and any suggested changes to assessment tasks, assessment criteria or Subject Outlines arising out of the process.

The appointment of external moderators will be reviewed every year by the Director of Education. External moderators may be remunerated for their work if the expenditure is approved by the Director of Education prior to appointment.

Examiners' Committee – Higher Education

The Examiners' Committee is responsible for moderating all higher education results across all campuses and will be provided with a report of grades from the relevant Heads of Department / Associate Heads of Department / Course Coordinators for every subject offered in any given semester, inclusive of online subjects offered during the reporting period. The Examiners' Committee will meet to discuss issues and possible cases of concern prior to grades being released. It will then meet again after grade release to moderate grade distributions across campuses, to discuss the External Moderator's report, and to suggest any changes to subjects or assessments based on issues arising out of moderation. The Examiners' Committee will provide a report on its moderation findings to the Academic Board.

The Scope of Moderation

Internal moderation must apply to each significant assessment component of a subject (i.e.: more than 25%) or lower weighting assessment under the conditions outlined above. Examination moderation will be performed for each formal examination for that subject.

External moderation must apply to a full sample of assessment items from at least two higher education subjects / assessments per academic Department per semester.

A minimum sample of 20% of nominated assessment items will be internally post-moderated during each teaching period, to include online and on-campus cohorts. A sample of all assessment items for at least 10 students or 10% of the students in a subject (whichever is the larger number) will be externally moderated. Examination moderation will be based on the examination paper and the Subject Outline, so the moderator must be presented with the complete examination paper, including all instructions and associated materials (including solutions and marking rubrics where applicable), and the Subject Outline.

Moderation of all assessment other than examinations will be based on the information in the Subject Outline. The moderator must be provided with a complete Subject Outline, and assessment guide including full assessment criteria.

Definitions

Blind Moderation – moderation process where the second marker does not see the first markers results during moderation.

Double Moderation – moderation process by which two markers mark the same piece of work. Comments made on the original piece of work are seen by the second marker.

Exchange Moderation – moderation process by which two markers exchange certain pieces of work for marking.

Student – is an individual person who is formally enrolled to study at the College. The individual person is that who appears on the College's documents such as enrolment, admission and payment documents, and who is assigned an individual student ID.

Related Procedures

[Moderation of Assessment Procedure – Higher Education](#)

Further Information

Related Policies

[Assessment Policy - Higher Education](#)

Related Documents

[Subject Assessment Moderation Recording Tool](#) (internal use only)

Guidelines

Not applicable

Benchmarking

ACPE

James Cook University

Supporting Research and Analysis

Not applicable

Related Legislation

Not applicable

Review and Approval

Policy Author

National Academic Manager - Curriculum

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Recommending Body

Academic Board

Meeting date: 29 November 2018

Approval Body

College Council

Meeting date: 14 December 2018

Policy Status

Revised

Responsibilities for Implementation

- Director of Education
- Heads of Department / Associate Heads of Department / Course Coordinators
- Subject Coordinators

Key Stakeholders

- Dean and Operations Director
- Director of Education
- Examiners' Committee
- Heads of Department / Associate Heads of Department / Course Coordinators
- Subject Coordinators