

# Moderation Policy

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Approved by	Academic Board
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## Purpose

The quality of Sydney Institute of Higher Education (SI)'s academic programs and the academic progress of its students is measured through valid and reliable assessment of the achievement of learning outcomes. Moderation of assessment is integral to the review and improvement of higher education assessment practices at SI, as it ensures that student assessment is graded consistently and fairly, and provides data for program and teaching and learning improvement.

This policy identifies the procedures that guide the assessment moderation process to be implemented by academic staff at SI. It defines for both academic staff and students their obligations and rights within the process.

## Scope

This policy applies to the marking of all student assessment tasks at SI, and the finalisation of student grades.

## Principles

SI students must be assured that their assessment tasks will be marked fairly, consistently and equitably according to the set criteria and standards.

Assessment criteria and standards, including grading criteria, will be reviewed and approved prior to the commencement of each teaching period as part of the pre-assessment moderation process.

All assessment tasks will be moderated.

Academic staff responsible for marking student assessment tasks are understood and applied moderation throughout the marking process.

Academic staff responsible for marking student assessment tasks must attend pre-marking moderation meetings and post-marking moderation meetings.

Marks and grades awarded for assessment tasks must not be released to students until the moderation process is completed.

End of term final grades will be reviewed and verified before submission and release to students.

Issues or discrepancies revealed during the moderation process will be addressed to ensure transparency and fairness for all students.

SI will continually improve the quality of assessment tasks and moderation processes, through periodic internal and external review, and benchmarking of all assessment policies and processes.

Students have the right to appeal assessment decisions, including marks awarded for individual assessment tasks and final grades. Students and staff are to refer to the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy* for the process for appealing assessment decisions.

## Procedures

### *Program and unit design*

The development of each unit in a program must integrate effective assessment strategies that will allow the moderation process to take place as intended. This includes clear criteria, standards, and marking criteria for assessment tasks that are aligned with the program and unit learning outcomes.

### *Staff responsibilities and information*

The moderation process and staff roles and responsibilities in the process must be defined and understood by all staff.

Assessment task criteria and standards, and grading criteria are to be included in the unit outline for each unit of study. Students and academic staff must have access to the unit outline prior to the commencement of the teaching period each term.

Staff will be trained in moderation processes through induction and professional development activities. Additional training and support will be provided to staff as necessary.

Staff members must declare any conflict of interest and agree to be removed from the moderation process where the conflict of interest applies.

Prior to moderation meetings, the Program Director is responsible for establishing and communicating to all staff involved:

- Academic staff roles and responsibilities
- Whether additional training is needed for staff involved in assessment
- The assessment task(s) to be moderated
- Any criteria necessary
- Dispute resolution processes during moderation
- Responsibilities for recordkeeping and reporting
- Moderation meeting schedule.

### *Information for Students*

#### *Unit of Study Outline*

All assessment tasks are subject to pre-assessment moderation. This includes analysis of the unit content

and assessment, including a comparison with other units offered at the same level within the program. This includes:

- Provision of syllabus to students that establishes learning outcomes of the program and assessment tasks
- Evaluation of the mapping of unit content and assessment to learning outcomes.
- Appropriateness of learning material and assessments for the assumed knowledge level of students.
- The level of academic challenge consistent with the level of the program or unit.
- Relevance and currency of learning materials.
- Fairness, equity, and culturally appropriateness of assessments, with reasonable weightings
- Appropriate and achievable timing of assessment tasks.
- Clear instructions for how to complete the assessment and grading criteria provided to students

### ***Preassessment and markers meeting***

Prior to each assessment task, the Unit Coordinator will distribute the grading criteria which must be discussed and clearly understood before marking.

If there is only one academic staff member involved in marking student work, the pre-assessment information will include the Program Director.

### ***Post-Assessment Moderation***

All assessment materials will be subject to post-assessment moderation. Post-assessment moderation involves:

- Double marking of student assessment that has achieved a fail grade
- Review of all grades prior to their communication to students by the relevant Program Director.

Any mark or grade discrepancies must be resolved. The Program Director may have to make the final decision if a resolution between markers cannot be achieved.

Following review, verification and consensus amongst markers, marks are finalised and recorded, ready for release to students.

### ***Double Marking***

An assessment submission will be automatically double-marked in the event that it is awarded:

- A mark below 50% (Fail grade)

Any discrepancies that arise in double marking are resolved by awarding the student the higher of the two marks obtained.

### ***Appeals***

Students have the right to appeal marks awarded for assessment tasks and final grades through the mechanisms specified in the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy*.

### ***Record-keeping and reporting***

The Program Director will provide, in accordance with the *Compliance Calendar*, a report on the marking, grading, and moderation processes for the program they are responsible for. This report must include:

- A final grades report, including:
  - All student marks and grades and student cohort progress through the program
  - A comment on the range of grades and level of student achievement
  - Suggestions for improvements and amendments to any aspect of the program that impacts moderation, student achievement and progress.
  - Identification of students at risk of failing and students in need of additional learning support.
- Moderation process report, including:
  - The frequency of double marking
  - The occurrence of notable variation in marking and disputes
  - Consistency of application of standards and grading criteria in marking
  - Staff feedback on the moderation process
  - Any student complaints about and appeals of assessment processes.

The full report on moderation activities must be submitted to the *Program Monitoring Committee* and the *Learning and Teaching Committee* at the end of each term.

### ***Improvements***

Based on reports, SI will make improvements in time for the next teaching period, in particular regarding:

- Clarity and usefulness of grading criteria and standards for both staff and students
- Accessibility of assessment methods to all students at SI
- Consistency and fairness of marking and moderation process

## **Policy Implementation and Monitoring**

The *Academic Board* delegates responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy to the Program Directors of each program, and the academic management committees to which the Program Directors report.

The *Academic Board* will review all periodic reports from relevant committees and staff members, in accordance with the *Compliance Calendar*.

Additionally, the *Academic Board* will review all relevant student complaints, concerns raised by staff members, and instances of student or staff misconduct in accordance with the *Compliance Calendar*.

Based on these monitoring activities, The *Academic Board*, in accordance with the *Compliance Calendar*, must provide a report to *Corporate Governance Board* and ensure that findings are taken into account in planning, quality assurance and improvement processes.

## Definitions

**Academic Board:** the governing body responsible for academic matters, including teaching and learning, program approval, workforce planning, academic staff appointments, research and professional development, academic policies and procedures, overseeing student grievances and appeals processes. The *Academic Board* reports to the *Corporate Governance Board*.

**Assessment:** the process of grading, marking and reviewing student assessment tasks against the assessment standards and criteria. This includes devising and using assessment criteria, standards and grading criteria; reviewing and comparing the marks and grades awarded to individual student submissions for the same assessment task within a unit of study.

**Assessment task:** a learning task within a unit of study designed to test the demonstration of program and unit learning outcomes. Examples include assignments, exams, online quizzes, essays, presentations, portfolios, essays, reflective journals. Assessment tasks must include clear instructions and guidelines on marking criteria and standards, and grading criteria.

**Program Director:** The most senior academic staff member responsible for the delivery of a specific program at SI. The Program Director is responsible for the planning and development of a program, particularly unit curriculum information, and works in conjunction with other senior academic staff.

**Program Monitoring Committee:** an internal committee responsible for reviewing student complaints, grievances and appeals, and monitoring, collating and reporting data on student performance and programs.

**Double marking:** the process by which a student's assessment task is marked by two markers in order to review, verify and endorse a mark and grade for the task.

**Moderation:** a quality assurance process to ensure the assessment process is consistent and transparent. This includes the review and endorsement of standards, marks for individual assessment tasks and final grades. Moderation occurs pre-assessment and post-assessment.

**Learning and Teaching Committee:** An academic management committee that reports to and advises the *Academic Board*, responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning at SI including progress towards achieving objectives of the *Teaching and Learning Plan* and the adequacy of all forms of support for teaching and learning present at SI.

## Review schedule

This policy will be reviewed by the *Academic Board* every three years.

Version History				
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	Academic Board	21/03/2018		21/03/2021

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End of document: "Moderation Policy"

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## Related Documents

		<a href="#">Academic Standards Policy</a>
		<a href="#">Assessment Policy</a>
		<a href="#">Benchmarking Policy</a>
		<a href="#">Conflict of Interest Policy</a>
		<a href="#">Program Development and Approval Policy</a>
		<a href="#">Program Review and Continual Improvement Policy</a>
		<a href="#">Student Complaints and Appeals Policy</a>