Moderation and Validation (HE) Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Procedure is to ensure quality, integrity and consistency of higher education courses.

(2) This Procedure describes how Melbourne Polytechnic's Assessment Framework quality assurance controls, safeguard and maintain Higher Education sector and industry/professional standards by:

a. requiring all subjects are validated at the time of subject design (prior to TEQSA accreditation) and when material change is approved;
b. ensuring both accredited and approved material change content is delivered (in other words, that the student subject outline contains the correct information);
c. ensuring that assessment/s are appropriate;
   i. assessment grading reflects the sector standard,
   ii. that intended learning outcomes are communicated, and assessed,
   iii. marks align to assessment judgments which are consistent with the marking rubric across all student cohorts.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) This Procedure applies to all staff across Melbourne Polytechnic involved in moderation and validation activities for Higher Education awarded courses, including but not limited to:

a. all delivery locations (onshore and offshore);
b. courses offered through partner institutions;
c. academic teaching and administrative staff; and
d. all Higher Education student cohorts (domestic and international).

Section 3 - Procedure

Subject Validation

(4) To ensure the delivery of high-quality subjects, subject validation is a review of the subject conducted by an independent discipline expert (subject validator). Subject validation is required to be conducted at the end of the subject design stage for all subjects (see Subject Life Cycle Validation and Moderation). Subject validation is conducted prior to accreditation or after subject material change approval, (see Course Development (HE) Policy).

(5) The Head of Program will identify and appoint an appropriately qualified academic who is not directly involved in the delivery of the subject as the subject validator and this will be communicated to the subject coordinator.

(6) The subject validator will critically evaluate the subject intended learning outcomes, assessments and resources to ensure appropriate content and assessment.

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(7) The subject validator will communicate their review findings to the subject coordinator via email.

(8) The subject coordinator will update the course subject validation schedule.

Subject intended learning outcomes:

(9) Are set correctly by aligning to the [Australian Qualification Framework (AQF)](#) classification;

(10) Will describe the subject purpose and what is intended to be taught in the subject, to students;

(11) Narrates the intent of what is to be taught, clearly, concisely and appropriately for students; and

(12) Align graduate attributes and/or professional requirements.

Validated assessments (assessment validation) will:

(13) Enable students to evidence their attainment of intended subject outcomes;

(14) Be described clearly and concisely;

(15) Be set at a suitable level based on the [Australian Qualification Framework (AQF)](#) classifications and ensure sector (education and professional industry) standards are maintained;

(16) Ensure assessment tasks are underpinned by appropriate weighting, timing and subject content;

(17) Consider academic standards pertaining to academic integrity and the use of artificial intelligence;

(18) Be varied and align to the requirements overviewed in [Assessment, Credit and Moderation (HE) Policy](#) and [Assessment (HE) Procedure](#);

(19) Describe any appropriate resourcing requirements for delivery and assessment (e.g. use of Turnitin for submission of assessments use of PowerPoint in presentation delivery);

(20) Provide topics and assessment time frames reasonably spread across the semester with one early assessment scheduled for first year subjects with assessment feedback being provided to students before census date;

(21) Be appropriately contextualized for identified student cohorts (e.g. offshore, students with disability, gender diversity);

(22) Assess graduate attributes and/or industry/professional requirements where stipulated;

(23) Will be supported by marking rubrics where the subject has been selected for submission as part of the accreditation portfolio;

(24) Assessment marking rubrics will be clear with assessment criteria that links to grading standards;

(25) Exam answer guides will clearly address the posed questions (exams/quizzes);

(26) The subject resources (including assessment resources):

   a. where resource requirements (e.g. software, equipment, materials etc.) and prescribed reading are required, these are specified and appropriate; and
   b. prescribed text/s are current and the appropriate to support the students' learning;
   c. assessment review findings that need amendment to be communicated to the subject coordinator via email.

Subject Outline Review

(27) Subject outline review will be undertaken before delivery and for each instance a subject is delivered. This quality assurance (level 1) control step will enable achievement of the following:

   a. a positive and consistent student experience;
   b. assurances that subject review has been undertaken which ensures maintenance of academic standards (see Subject Validation section);
   c. that only accredited/material change register approved content is delivered.

(28) A subject outline review will be conducted by a subject outline reviewer (independent academic staff member who does not deliver the subject) appointed by the Head of Program.

(29) The subject outline reviewer, will ensure the following:

   a. the subject outline describes the subject content (overview, intended learning outcomes, assessments, resources and prescribed literature) as per the [TEQSA](#) course accreditation and/or the Program Material Changes register (actioning only Melbourne Polytechnic governance approved changes, see [Higher Education Course Committee (HECC) Terms of Reference](#) and [Higher Education Academic Board (HEAB) Terms of Reference)](#);
   b. that assessments are scheduled after associated topics/content are delivered;
   c. topics are consistent with accredited subject learning outcomes; and
   d. where assessment rubrics are required, these are prepared before delivery ensuring they are available before students start work on their assessments.
   e. Review of all first-year subject rubrics, will ensure they support student transition into Higher Education study (e.g. guiding them through expectations of academic writing, presentation etc.).
   f. The completion of the subject outline review should be recorded on the subject outline.

Subject Delivery Preparation

(30) The subject coordinator or principal lecturer is appointed by the Head of Program.

(31) The subject coordinator/principal lecturer is responsible for the subject preparation and delivery of the subject which includes:

   a. providing academic leadership/discipline expertise to ensure the delivery of a high-quality subject;
   b. development of assessment rubrics and marking guides;
   c. development or sourcing of subject resources;
   d. populating the subject learning management system (Moodle) with all required learning resources;
   e. the maintenance of academic standards pertaining to assessment;
   f. ensuring the student assessment moderation directed by the Head of Program is completed to required schedules;
   g. meeting with the academic teaching team (which includes those staff allocated to marking and tutoring activities) prior to the start of teaching to explain the rubric and expected performance standards;
   h. that the subject learning management system (Moodle) assessment submission is set up as per information in the subject student outline;
   i. that final examinations will be validated at least four (4) weeks prior to the scheduled assessment. Tests and quizzes (over 10% of grade) will be validated at least one (1) week prior to the scheduled assessment.

(32) Head of Program where appropriate may undertake tasks assigned to the subject coordinator/principal lecturer or

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nominate other academic(s) to perform these tasks.

(33) Matters requiring oversight must be referred to the Head of Program for resolution.

(34) The Course Administrator(s) support checking and updating student enrolments into the subject learning management system (Moodle).

(35) Lecturers, tutors and assessors are appointed by the Head of Program and in consultation with the subject coordinator or principal lecturer.

(36) Lecturers will teach and support delivery, ensuring high quality delivery as per employment position description duties and direction from Head of Program.

(37) Lecturers and assessors are responsible for making an academic judgement pertaining to assessments and entering a grade/mark into the subject learning management system (Moodle).

(38) Assessment marking will be conducted within the [Assessment (HE) Procedure](#) specified timelines.

(39) Student assessments grades/marks should only be made available to students (via Moodle) once required assessment moderation activities are completed (see Assessment Grade Moderation section).

(40) Lecturers/assessors are required to provide the moderated mark and grades to the Results Review Meeting Committee (RRM). The Results and Integrity Committee (RIC) will review the Results Review Meeting Committee recommendations, apply academic judgements (marks may be adjusted, scaled or moderated) and award grades.

Assessment Grade Moderation

(41) Moderation:

    a. ensures that the academic judgement made by the subject lecturer/assessor is appropriate, consistent and integrity is upheld across all student cohorts. This activity supports a consistent student experience regardless of delivery instance, mode, location or lecturer.
    b. forms part of Melbourne Polytechnic (level 1) quality assurance process ensuring that academic standards for each qualification are upheld by moderating a proportion of student's grades.
    c. should be conducted by an 'independent' academic, one that is not delivering the subject.

(42) Moderation schedules will be developed:

    a. by the Head of Program;
    b. will identify which subjects in each qualification delivered across the semester will be moderated;
    c. in response to mitigating academic risks and where required, will align with industry, professional or registration expectations;
    d. academic risks associated with the qualifications will be identified and ranked with the highest risk ranking subjects being moderated;
    e. and can consider the following (but not limited to) risk categories:
        i. lecturer or assessor experience. Noting that newly appointed staff to Melbourne Polytechnic have the potential to represent higher risk than experienced academics;
        ii. the first instance of delivery (including the first instance of delivery following a material change;
        iii. subjects delivered to high-risk student cohorts , for example offshore delivery;
        iv. the [Australian Quality Framework (AQF)](#) level of the subject, where final year subjects afford a higher [AQF](#) level or support a high allocation of qualification weighting (for example 24 or 48 point capstone

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subjects);

    v. subjects that support a high proportion of scholarship, research and/or innovation;

    vi. subjects that are impacted by changes in legislation or changes in health and safety;

    vii. subjects that are definitive/provide substantive evidence for attaining professional accreditation or industry registration;

    viii. subjects identified as at risk through routine monitoring including:

- as part of the program annual course performance report (ACPR) which include consideration of student success measures;
- student load, attrition, progression and completion;
- through review of student evaluation feedback;
- subjects that have been identified as at risk of academic integrity breaches; and
- subjects identified as at risk through external independent review.

f. Moderation schedules will be subject to oversight (level 3 quality assurance) and presented to the Higher Education Course Committee (HECC) for review and approval.

g. Approved HECC moderation schedules should be routinely reviewed and where required updated before delivery by the Head of Program. The updated moderation schedule must be endorsed by the departmental manager or Director Higher Education before delivery commences.

h. Records of HECC-approved moderation schedules and changes to these schedules need to be kept by the Course Administrator.

i. Moderation schedule records will be retained for a period of up to 4 years after delivery.

(43) The Head of Program will communicate subject moderation requirements to subject coordinators/principal lecturers before delivery commences.

(44) Subjects to be moderated, will include a random sample of student assessments, that represent either moderation of full grade distributions or where student cohorts are small, moderate up to approximately 30% of the class size, moderating cohorts most at risk (Table 1: Student Assessment Moderation).

(45) During the semester progressive assessment grade moderation is undertaken.

(46) Moderated assessment tasks for the scheduled subject moderation are selected whilst preparing and approving the Student Subject Outline.

(47) Submitted student assessments for each selected assessment task (see note under table) are moderated following:

a. marking by the academic/s teaching the subject (assessor); and

b. within 15 days of the assessment due date. Where moderation cannot meet this requirement, the student will be alerted through the marking workflow state in Moodle being: "In moderation".

(48) Where there is more than one academic assessing student work, moderation may be undertaken by subject peers to ensure that consistency of marking is achieved.

(49) Moderation of subjects can be undertaken by moderation panels. Members of the moderation panel are to be appointed by the Head of Program.

(50) Moderation of subjects can be undertaken by one assessor that is appointed by the Head of Program.

(51) Subject coordinators/lecturers are responsible for supplying the following material to the assessment moderation assessor/panel members:

a. a copy of the sample assessment tasks/examinations;

b. a copy of the initial assessors' assessment marking rubric/marking guide;

c. the student subject outline; and

d. assessment criteria and marking rubric.

e. a breakdown of assessment marks in examinations for all students in the [Subject Assessment Moderation Spreadsheet](#)

(52) Moderation assessors/panels are required to:

a. record assessment moderator marks in the assessment moderation spreadsheet and compare;

b. where marking between the lecturer and assessment moderator agrees within 5% for a student assessment, mark adjustments are not required to that assessment;

c. where marking between the lecturer and assessment moderator differs by more than 5% for a student assessment, marking review is required; and

d. ensure moderated mark adjustments are communicated to the Results Review Meeting Committee (RRM) and Results and Integrity Committee (RIC).

(53) Marking review requires the lecturer and assessment moderator/moderation panel to:

a. identify and discuss differences in marking decisions based on the assessment criteria and the marking rubric;

b. refer disputed marking to the Head of Program for resolution;

c. respond to Head of Program requirement to re-assess or re-moderate student assessments. This may be individual assessments or assessment within the same mark range(s);

d. determine changes to the student's mark, as appropriate;

e. determine changes to the marks of some or all students' work as appropriate; refer discrepancies to the Head of Program for resolution; and

f. report the outcome of marking review, reasoning behind outcome decisions and any suggestions for subject improvement using the [Subject Assessment Moderation Spreadsheet](#).

(54) Assessment grade moderation occurs promptly after assessment marking normally within 15 days of the assessment due date, to support timely and meaningful feedback to students. Where student work has been selected for moderation, this may result in later return of marks, although assessment feedback can be provided within the 15-days.

(55) If deemed appropriate, the Head of Program can require additional subject assessment moderation to be undertaken. The rationale, scope, volume and timing of the additional moderation will be recorded prior to being undertaken.

(56) Documentation of Subject Assessment Moderation is collated and stored by the Course Administrator.

(57) Periodically benchmarking is undertaken between subjects at the same level within the same course and across courses, as well as similar courses at other institutions.

Assessment Grade Review prior to result release

(58) Assessment marking will be reviewed by the RRM and RIC for students whose subject result is between 47-49%but only where for students who have submitted all assessment tasks.

(59) All moderated assessments must be documented and documentation provided to the Head of Program at the end of each semester.

(60) All subject grades are reviewed at the Results Review Meeting Committee (RRM) which makes recommendations for adjustments to be considered by the Results and Integrity Committee (RIC) under the following conditions: at the may approve grade adjustments under the following circumstances:

    a. large numbers of fails or HDs;
    b. borderline marks;
    c. large numbers of students with the same grade;
    d. differences between grades of individual markers; and
    e. differences between grades of individual students across consecutive assessment tasks.

(61) The Results and Integrity Committee (RIC) reviews and approves recommendations for adjusted grades and marks according to its terms of reference.

(62) The Results and Integrity Committee (RIC) may direct requirements for continuous improvement at subject, course or Directorate level according to its terms of reference.

Section 4 - Responsibility and Accountability

(63) The Director Higher Education is responsible for:

    a. Ensuring this Procedure and associated procedures are applied across teaching areas;
    b. Supporting the Results Review Meeting Committee (RRM) and Results and Integrity Committee (RIC);
    c. Ensuring validation and moderation activities are conducted appropriately; and
    d. Endorsing qualification moderation schedule changes.

(64) The Director Asia Academic Operations is responsible for:

    a. Ensuring all contracts with international partners adhere to this Procedure and associated procedures.

(65) Managers are responsible for:

    a. Oversight of all validation and moderation activities to ensure the Policy and Procedure is followed; and
    b. Endorsing qualification moderation schedule changes.

(66) The Head of Program is responsible for:

    a. Overseeing validation and moderation activities at course level, including any collaboration with other courses where necessary;
    b. Appointing peer reviewers;
    c. Identifying and appointing subject assessment validators and assessment moderators;
    d. Development of the subject moderation schedule for each qualification delivered in their program;
    e. Submitting subject moderation schedule to HECC;
    f. Resolving any differences of opinion at any stage of subject assessment validation;
    g. Leading continuous improvement, review of assessment strategies and benchmarking;
    h. Determining and requesting re-assessment and/or re-moderation of student assessment where Assessor and Assessment Moderator marking differs by 5% or more;
    i. Providing recommendations of subject marks to RIC.

(67) The Subject Coordinator/principal lecturer is responsible for:

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a. Meeting with academic teaching staff involved in subject delivery to explain assessment criteria and expected performance standards to support consistent assessment judgements;

b. Adhering to the subject moderation schedules as directed by the Head of Program;

c. Overseeing validation and moderation of subject where a subject is taught by multiple academics; and

d. Identifying students with a subject result between 45-49% who have attempted all assessment tasks; and

e. Allocating academics to double mark the greatest weighted assessment.

(68) Academics are responsible for:

a. Assessment marking and making academic standard judgements;

b. Participating in assessment grade moderation as directed by the Head of Program (within and across courses);

c. Reviewing and validating subject assessments in student subject outlines including examinations;and

d. Participating in program peer review for subject assessment validation for continuous improvement.

(69) The Course Administrator is responsible for:

a. Storing completed Assessment Grade Moderation documentation;

b. Storing completed Subject Assessment Validation documentation; and

c. Collating and storing the subject moderation schedules;

d. Preparing the presentation of results for the Results and Integrity Committee (RIC);

e. Entering ratified subject results into the Student Management System.

(70) Manager Academic Quality Higher Education is responsible for:

a. Advising and contributing to continuous quality improvement processes; and

b. Providing advice and guidance on processes related to assessment matters.

(71) Results and Integrity Committee (RIC) is responsible for:

a. Ensuring academic integrity of student grades, including reviewing grade distributions;

b. Recommendations of exception reports;

c. Scaling (if required); and

d. Ratifying final grades for publication to students.

Section 5 - Definitions

(72) For the purpose of this Procedure the following definitions apply:

a. Assessment: A process to determine a student's achievement of identified learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration.

b. Assessment grade moderation: Quality assurance processes that ensure comparability of standards of student performance at different grade levels across different markers, locations, subjects, providers and/or courses.

c. Assessment task: A specific, discrete learning activity, exercise or a series of formative works that address a common skill set designed to obtain evidence about a student's achievement of the published learning outcomes of a course. Tasks can be diagnostic, formative, or summative, including but not limited to, essays, presentations, performance, exhibition or final examinations. (In the previous policy version described as Assessment Item).

d. Assessor: Academic responsible for marking student assessment.

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e. Borderline marks: Describe a grade or score arrived at in the assessment of a student's work or performance, which falls on the dividing line between two grades.

f. Course: An accredited qualification made up of a defined set of subjects.

g. Criterion referenced assessment: The process of judging and grading student achievement by comparing the quality of the work submitted against a set of specified criteria related to the desired learning outcomes of a course.

h. Double marking: A process where a minimum of two markers marks a piece of work and agree a final mark. The second marker(s) do not see the first mark until initial assessment is complete, and then upon consultation both (all) markers review to support the setting of the final agreed mark.

i. Formative assessment: An assessment that is used to provide students with feedback on their progress and can be incorporated in subsequent assessment tasks and learning activities as part of the learning experience.

j. Learning outcome: The expression of a set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

k. Marking rubric: Sets out the criteria for marking an assessment and describes expected levels of performance associated with the assessment.

l. Moderation: The process of reviewing student's assessment to ensure it meets sector/professional standards or criteria. This process is often carried out by a moderator or may be carried out via a panel of moderators. Moderators are typically either experts, experienced individuals in the specific field or senior academics providing academic leadership.

m. Moderator: A person who reviews an assessment to ensure it meets certain standards or criteria.

n. Program: The nested set of courses leading to a qualification.

o. Results Review Meeting: A meeting conducted at course level responsible for reviewing and consolidating student results and making recommendations to the Results and Integrity Committee (RIC) regarding scaling of marks, supplementary assessment and students eligible for a Conceded Pass.

p. Scaling of marks: Scaling refers to the adjustment of a group of marks of an entire class or a subset of that class or of individual marks or compiled marks.

q. Subject: A discrete unit of study.

r. Subject assessment validation: Subject Assessment Validation refers to the review of a subject's learning outcomes, assessments, and educational strategies.

s. Subject assessment validator: An appropriately qualified academic staff member, not directly involved in the delivery of the subject who reviews assessment tasks to ensure they align and reflect the learning outcomes for the course and subject, and that the content and criteria are set at the appropriate level.

t. Subject moderation schedule: A schedule that includes the subjects for each course and time frames for assessment grade moderation to progressively occur as part of quality assurance and continuous improvement. The subject moderation schedule may include external reviewers.

u. Subject validation: is the process that ensures the scope and content of the subject aligns to the course.

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Policy Implementation Officer	Nicola Cooley Director Higher Education
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