

# Higher Education Monitoring and Moderation of Grades Policy

## Fact box

- **Policy owner:** Chair, Learning and Teaching Committee
- **Policy category:** Academic: Learning and Teaching
- **Policy status:** Approved
- **Approval body:** Academic Board
- **Endorsement body:** Learning & Teaching Committee
- **Related policies:**
  - [Assessment Policy](#)
  - [Course Progression Policy](#)
  - [Grading Policy](#)
  - [Higher Education Subject Development, Delivery and Review Policy](#)
  - [Micro-credentials and Short Courses Policy](#)
  - [Support for Students Policy](#)
- **Last amended:** 7th March 2024
- **Relevant HESF:** 1.3, 5.3, 5.4, 6.3

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Alphacrucis University College (AC) maintains an appropriate level of quality and consistency in Higher Education (HE) subject grades allocated to ensure high academic standards and integrity of awards.

## Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled in, and all staff involved in the delivery of coursework subjects in Higher Education (HE).

## Policy

### GLOSSARY

Moderation, internal and external, is a collegial academic quality assurance process where faculty review aspects of assessment, usually grading and feedback, to ensure their validity, reliability, and consistency, as integral to academic standards and the integrity of awards.

Calibration is a process of peer review carried out by members of a disciplinary and/or professional community who typically discuss, review, and compare student work to reach a shared understanding of the academic standard which such work needs to meet.

### PRINCIPLES

Principles:

- Assessment design and practices are appropriate to the AQF level and subject to ensure academic standards are maintained;
- Assessment tasks are graded against a marking scheme (rubric) that is consistent with the learning outcomes and assessment criteria;

- Moderation facilitates the commitment of AC to academic quality assurance and continuous improvement of awards and subjects;
- Moderation of assessment helps establish comparability of standards of student performance across different markers and locations. However, moderation is only one part of a broader approach to assure standards in a subject;
- Moderation facilitates high quality assessment practices by assisting faculty to make assessment judgements that are valid, reliable, and consistent, and actively improve learning and teaching;
- Moderation of assessment should occur in a timely manner following completion of marking, and should not significantly delay the provision of results or feedback to students;
- Internal post-assessment moderation of higher education programs is conducted for each subject every time it is delivered, to ensure consistency in assessment contributing to a student's final grade in a subject;
- External post-assessment moderation of higher education subjects must be conducted as part of a scheduled external review and moderation process, to ensure consistent and appropriate standards of assessment for the relevant Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level of the course of study. A record of external moderation will be maintained by the Learning and Teaching Committee in an External Moderation register.

## **POLICY**

### **Internal Monitoring of Grades**

Grades for student assessment should be awarded by faculty and differentiated in accordance with the Grading Policy. Faculty are to submit final grades by the date set by the Learning and Teaching Committee (or delegated representative) each teaching period so that grades can be reviewed through the process of internal monitoring of grades and sent to students in a timely manner.

Examples of internal moderation processes include:

- Involving all teaching staff in a unit in the development and review of rubrics;
- Cross marking/grading with follow-up meetings for discussion and comparison;
- Using one teacher to mark/grade all responses to a particular part of an assessment task (e.g., a section of an examination paper);
- Holding moderation meetings to confirm consistency of marking/grading across teachers; these meetings could involve:
  - discussing difficulties encountered when making judgments, for example, interpreting a standards descriptor.
  - developing solutions to these difficulties, such as altering the rubric to account for unforeseen and unintended student interpretation of wording.

- reviewing student responses and profiles of their results, in instances where there appears to be significant differences in marking/grading - this can assist teachers in fine-tuning their judgments so that they are in line with other teachers' judgments.

## **External Moderation of Grades**

External Moderation of Grades is used to ensure that grade allocations are consistent, valid and reliable. The process establishes and promotes standards and equity at the appropriate level in each subject, and ensures comparability in quality between other institutions teaching comparable courses.

AC requires that:

1. Learning and Teaching Committee takes responsibility for implementing and overseeing appropriate mechanisms for external moderation of grades. The Learning and Teaching Committee will determine subjects to be moderated on a risk-based, systematic approach. Subjects to be moderated will be determined by stakeholder data, usually student and faculty feedback, indicating academic risks associated with a particular subject, which require external moderation to mitigate risk. Other subjects will be determined as high priority for moderation based on factors such as changes actioned as a result of course review and re-development, implementation of new subjects, or special electives.
2. Learning and Teaching Committee will ensure that moderation activities are completed and required changes or continuous improvements are actioned.

Supporting guidelines

The Australian Qualifications Framework | AQF

Responsible for implementation

Chair, Learning and Teaching Committee

Key stakeholders

All faculty and students

Procedures

## **Higher Education Monitoring and Moderation of Grades**

### **Internal Monitoring of Grades Procedure**

AC requires that:

- A School based moderation, led by the relevant Head of School, is undertaken at the conclusion of assessment each semester. As a result of this process, all grades are verified and recorded accurately. Additionally, any missing grades are accompanied by an explanatory note indicating reasons for the gap and a due date when the gap is expected to be filled;

- The Head of School provides moderated grades to the Internal Monitoring of Grades subcommittee at least two days prior to the meeting of the subcommittee to review all grades;
- Learning and Teaching Committee appoint an Internal Monitoring of Grades subcommittee that includes Program Directors (or equivalent), Program Administrators, the Director of Quality Assurance and the Director of Student Administration. The Learning and Teaching Committee should also appoint a chairperson for this subcommittee;
- After each teaching period, following School moderation of grades, the subcommittee will review grades across all subjects completed in that teaching period at AC campuses, online and through HETPAs. The subcommittee is tasked to review the grades awarded to ensure their validity and reliability. The monitoring shall include consideration of the distribution of grades within each subject and comparison of assessments across campuses within the same subjects;
- The monitoring of grades process will also note any students needing to be placed on an Academic Progress Intervention Strategy in line with the Course Progression Policy, or any students needing to be excluded from a course in line with the Exclusion from a Course or Subject Policy. The School and Registry will agree on the students to be placed on intervention at the meeting;
- The subcommittee shall be provided (upon demand) a copy of subject handouts given to students that include learning outcomes, assessment guidelines, and any other requirements specific to the course being monitored. They shall also be provided (upon demand) with sampling of student work;
- The subcommittee shall report any matters of concern to the Learning and Teaching Committee and propose changes to improve outcomes in assessment practice and equity across all AC campuses;
- The subcommittee approves the release of grades by the date published in the Academic Calendar;
- The Director of Student Administration will be responsible for the release of grades.

### **External Moderation of Grades Procedure**

External moderation of grades is undertaken by an appointed external moderator with expertise in the relevant discipline. This external moderation may be conducted individually or through an inter-institutional moderation agreement. The Learning and Teaching Committee will appoint an administrator to invite relevant and qualified academics external to act as External Moderators. An External Moderator will be selected for each subject to be moderated.

The administrator, in consultation with the relevant School, will provide for each subject being moderated:

- Student Subject Handout – which should include assessment expectations and rubrics;
- A selection of graded papers for each assessment (typically 3) as follows: high, middle and low graded assessments. Where the moderation relates to delivery in a LOTE, the External Moderator shall be bilingual in both A and B (normally English) languages. The papers are de-identified by the administrator.

Moderators are asked to:

- Review the graded assessments. This specifically refers to the validity and reliability of marking;
- Prepare an External Moderation of Grades Report for AC's review that includes:
  - Comments on the validity and reliability of marking with respect to that expected in a course of study in an Australian higher education institution;
  - Constructive feedback on the assessment tasks ;
  - Any other matter considered relevant to the delivery of higher education courses of study.

The external moderation of marks is necessarily post-hoc in nature. Consequently, it informs subsequent assessment practices rather than alters the outcomes of the internal grading process conducted each semester.

Once the External Moderation of Grades Report has been received, it is to be forwarded to the appropriate Program Director or Head of Discipline for review and response to the Learning and Teaching Committee. The Committee is responsible to ensure that any required changes or improvements are actioned, including Professional Development activities if needed.

A final report on all External Moderation of Grades activities for each semester will be tabled at Academic Board in the Learning and Teaching Committee Report.

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