

Moderation and Validation Policy



Institute of Health &
Management Pty. Ltd.

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www.ihm.edu.au



SECTION 1

Purpose

1. This Policy provides a framework intended to ensure:
 - a) Assessment quality assurance processes provide clear guidance for the formal review of assessment design and practice in Higher Education courses of study.
 - b) Consistent and appropriate standards of assessment through comprehensive pre-assessment, and, Internal and external post-assessment, moderation processes.
 - c) Course and unit materials provided to students contain clearly-stated learning outcomes and current learning resources, and that students understand what is expected to satisfactorily complete the requirements of courses.
 - d) Unit assessment tasks are stated unambiguously, consistent with internal and external curriculum principles for the course and the learning outcomes for the unit, and that they are appropriately and fairly weighted and are applied consistently irrespective of the place and mode of delivery.
 - e) Everyone involved in course delivery and assessment has a shared understanding of the principles in the Assessment Policy and will make informed assessment judgments that are transparent and applied consistently to all students.

Scope

2. This Policy applies to all:
 - a) higher education courses at Institute of Health & Management (IHM).
 - b) students, staff, and others associated with, or contracted by, IHM who are responsible for assessment in these courses.

Definitions

3. The following definitions are relevant to this Policy:
 - a) **Academic integrity** - Relates to honest and responsible scholarship through students creating and expressing their ideas, acknowledging all sources of information, completing all work, e.g. assessment tasks independently and/or, acknowledging any collaboration.
 - b) **Assessment** - is a process to determine a student's achievement of expected learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration.¹
 - c) **Assessment task** - Includes, but is not limited to essays, tests, examinations, laboratory, field, and clinical work, workplace learning tasks, portfolios, projects, presentations, and online activities.
 - d) **Assignment** - An assignment is a set or prescribed task that a student is expected to complete over an extended period and by a designated due date. Assignments allow and usually require students to do further reading and research while completing the task. An assignment must produce an assessable artifact or performance such as a paper, a work in an electronic medium such as a video or a presentation.
 - e) **AQF Qualification** - This qualification is the result of an accredited complete course of learning leading to formal certification that a graduate has achieved the learning outcomes described in the AQF
 - f) **Benchmarking** - Is a structured, collaborative process for comparing practices, processes, and outcomes of courses across the Higher Education sector. It assists IHM to identify comparative

¹ Refer to the AQF Glossary of Terminology in the *Australian Qualifications Framework*, January 2013

strengths and weaknesses that will support ongoing improvements in academic quality.²

- g) **Core Generic skills** - The Australian Qualifications Framework, which spans all education and training sectors, captures Core Generic skills under four broad categories: Basic Fundamental skills, People skills, Thinking skills, and Personal skills.
- h) **Criterion** - is a specific aspect of performance that is specified by the assessor and which the student must consider and address in their submitted response to an assessment task. Where a grade is assigned, it is assigned on the judgment of the standard the student has achieved on each of the criteria specified for the task. It provides a focus for learning and teaching and specifies for both student and assessor what is required from the assessment task.
- i) **Criterion-referenced assessment** - involves the use of predetermined criteria and standards to support judgments about the quality of a student's performance rather than a reference to the achievement of other students and/or a scaled distribution of grades across a cohort it is often defined in contrast to norm-referenced assessment defined below.
- j) **Equity and ease of access** - Assessment must avoid placing requirements upon students that they cannot meet due to their special needs unless those requirements are an intrinsic part of the course content or the intended employment outcomes of its graduates. In some special cases, the alternative assessment will be provided to students who have special needs such as a disability, injury, or illness.
- k) **Examiner**-Any academic staff member involved directly in the marking evaluation of a student's performance in an examination or assignment is considered an examiner.
- l) **Examination**-An examination is a formalised process allowing students to demonstrate skills, knowledge, and procedures within a limited timeframe. The time limitations on an examination are such that there is no or very limited opportunity for students to access resources or do further reading while they complete it.
- m) **External Referencing** - a process through which a higher education provider compares an aspect of its operations with an **external** comparator(s)
- n) **Feedback in the context of assessment** - Feedback in the context of assessment relates to the information returned to students on their progress in a unit of study or learning outcomes. The information can be quantified in the form of marks or grades for assessment tasks and/or in the qualitative form such as comments, model answers, reading suggestions, etc. All assessments should incorporate both formative and summative assessment feedback for students to use in the pursuit of life-long learning (assessment FOR learning) in addition to an assessment of learning to date (assessment OF learning).
- o) **Formative assessment** - an assessment task is formative when it provides feedback to students on how their work can be improved. Formative assessment aims to help students to monitor and reflect on their learning progress and determine where improvements can be made.
- p) **Integrity of assessments** - IHM will take all reasonable and necessary steps to ensure that students complete their assessments themselves, unaided, and with integrity. All students will sign or electronically acknowledge a declaration that work they are submitting for assessment is their own and is free from collusion, plagiarism, and other forms of misconduct.
- q) **Learning Outcomes** -The expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the

² Definition adapted from TEQSA's *Guidance Note: External Referencing (including Benchmarking)*, Version 2.5, 16 April 2019 (Link: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-external-referencing-including-benchmarking>, accessed 15 June 2022)

- knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.³
- r) **Moderation** - Is a quality assurance and control process that aims to assure consistency and/or comparability, appropriateness, and fairness of assessment judgments, as well as the validity and reliability of assessment tasks, criteria and standards. Moderation of assessment processes establish comparability of standards of student performance across, for example different markers, locations, subject, providers and/or courses of study.⁴ At IHM, moderation has three phases: pre-delivery moderation; moderation during delivery; and post-delivery moderation.
 - s) **Peer review of Assessment** - Ensuring assessment is fit-for-purpose, clearly communicated and moderated, e.g. using the [Peer Review Portal](#), a cloud-based review management system, approved by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) as an optional support mechanism which universities, industry, disciplinary networks, and professional bodies can use to meet academic standards through external review.
 - t) **Prevention of plagiarism and collusion** - Prevention of plagiarism is central to the design of assessment tasks as well as the processes by which they are administered and marked. Policies and procedures relating to this are outlined in the Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy.
 - u) **Rubric (or assessment rubric)** - a rubric is an evaluation tool or set of guidelines used to promote consistent marking of an assessment task. A rubric communicates the application of expectations about learning outcomes, the criteria that will be used to judge their achievement, and the standards of performance or quality expectations around a particular criterion for demonstrating achievement of the learning in an assessment task.
 - v) **Standards** - are statements describing the level of the quality of performance in relation to stated criteria in an assessment task. When specific criteria are established in standards-based assessment specified levels and qualities of performance are developed as standards to demonstrate achievement of those criteria for each assessment task. Marks can be awarded by reference to the standards of performance specified across the various criteria of the assessment task. To achieve this, staff must identify and articulate clearly the different levels of performance that are connected to the grade and communicate those standards to students and other staff.
 - w) **Student** - A person who has enrolled in and been admitted to a course or unit of study at IHM. For this policy, this includes students who have completed their course, up until all marking has been completed and their final transcripts and awards have been conferred.
 - x) **Summative assessment** - assessment is summative when it forms part of the final grade in a Unit. The student's work is assessed in terms of pre-determined standards so that it can be classified in terms of levels of achievement (grades).
 - y) **Units** - Units are the component parts of accredited courses (this includes HE, Non-Award Courses) that are designed as discrete entities but also complement other Units to form a coherent course of study that leads to the learning outcomes of an award course. Each Unit has a distinct set of learning outcomes the achievement of which are measured through appropriate assessment tasks.
 - z) **Validation**: Validation is a process of peer review, which occurs before the setting of assessment tools. It is used to check that assessment is aligned with and reflects unit learning outcomes, and that the format, content, and criteria for assessment are set at an appropriate level.
 - aa) **Workloads** - Assignments and examinations are a part of the student workload for each unit of study and must therefore be taken into consideration in the calculation of hours and credit points.

³ Refer to the AQF Glossary of Terminology in the *Australian Qualifications Framework*, January 2013

⁴ Definition adapted from TEQSA's Glossary of terms (Link: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/glossary-terms>, accessed 15 June 2022)

Suite documents

4. This Policy is linked to the following:
 - a) Moderation and Validation Procedure
 - b) See also the associated information listed in the 'Related Internal Documents' in Section 3 below.

SECTION 2

Policy

5. Principles

- a) All students receive fair and equitable treatment about the assessment and marking of their achievement of Unit and Course Learning Outcomes.
- b) Courses and Units include a variety of assessment types consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed.
- c) Comprehensive design and moderation processes ensure that assessment methods are fit for purpose, valid, reliable, and effective.
- d) The number of assessments for each unit is manageable within the context of student workload demands across the course of study.
- e) Assessment design and the quality process is transparent to students and teaching staff.
- f) Assessment is moderated and validated internally and externally to meet the higher education and professional accreditation requirements.

6. Assessment Quality Assurance

- a) Assessment quality assurance is a process that occurs in addition to the day-to-day continuous improvement activities expected in the unit and course design and delivery. This includes:
 - a. The validation of assessment tools and processes before use.
 - b. Moderation of assessment outcomes, for the appropriate and consistent marking of student work.
 - c. Periodic benchmarking of assessment to ensure calibration of standards at discipline, national, and international level.

7. Quality Assurance, Moderation, and Review (extract from the IHM Assessment Policy)

- a) Quality assurance of assessment should occur at both the course and the unit level.
- b) Quality assurance of assessment must be maintained at every stage of the assessment cycle.
- c) Assessment tasks will be subject to routine pre-assessment review to ensure that they
 - a. reflect appropriate assessment design, including their fit with unit learning outcomes
 - b. focus on higher-order learning
 - c. use appropriate assessment criteria, and
 - d. align with the unit's learning outcomes.
- d) Units offered across campuses must be developed to ensure that they have equivalent assessment tasks with the same learning outcomes and graduate attributes at the same standards.



- e) Approved variation is possible, but equivalence should be demonstratable, and no students should be advantaged or disadvantaged relative to students undertaking the unit at another campus or location or in another study mode.
- f) Moderation will be undertaken in all units to ensure the assessment criteria and standards used when markings are consistent across all markers in the same unit regardless of learning mode and campus location.
- g) Lecturers are responsible for establishing a quality assurance regime for the assessment in courses and units.
- h) This will include both internal and external moderation and benchmarking of assessment.
- i) Evidence of moderation must be provided with the recommended grades and marks provided to Academic Board.
- j) Students should be informed that it is routine practice for samples of students' work to be used for moderation.

8. Validation of Assessment

- a) Validation of assessment is an ongoing process that must be integrated into the course and assessment design, delivery, and review of the overall assessment strategy and activities.
- b) Validation activities typically involve a review of the assessment or examination paper and marking scheme or rubric before distribution to students. The process will be documented and analysed to facilitate future improvement to assessment.
- c) Validation involves checking that the assessment tool is likely to produce valid, reliable, efficient, fair, and authentic evidence for assessment.
- d) Validators are asked to:
 - a. Review the unit outline, course content, and structure. They are to evaluate against the Principles of Assessment and Graduate Attributes.
 - b. Review the graded assessments; and
 - c. Complete the Validation Report.

9. Moderation Process

- a) Moderation activities typically involve the Unit Coordinator undertaking a review of a sample of assessed work after final unit assessment, as provided by each of the unit teaching staff.
- b) Where the unit is delivered in more than one location or mode of delivery, samples from each of these must be represented.

10. Moderators

- a) Moderators will be appointed by the Learning and Teaching Committee.
- b) Moderators will be experienced staff, with appropriate skills.
- c) Moderators may be staff currently teaching or marking in the Unit.
- d) The Academic Dean may also be the moderator if they have the appropriate skills and knowledge.
- e) Moderators cannot moderate their marking or Unit outlines.
- f) It is expected that moderators will be provided with appropriate training.

11. The role of Internal Assessment Moderation

- a) The role of assessment moderators is defined as including:
 - a. Reviewing the appropriateness of all assessment items as specified in the Unit outlines and recommending improvements if any;

- b. Moderating or endorsing the marked progressive assessments (e.g. mid-term, assignments) during the term and recommending improvements if any;
- c. Reviewing the appropriateness of end-of-term assessment (i.e. final examination) during the term and recommending improvements if any;
- d. Moderating or endorsing the marked end-of-term assessment after the exam period and recommending improvements if any;
- b) Ensuring all assessment items comply with the current IHM Assessment Policy.

12. The Role of External Benchmarking for Moderation

- a) External moderation involves benchmarking learning outcomes, assessment practices and outcomes, and grade distributions with similar accredited courses offered by other higher education providers to ensure comparability of standards and to gain feedback for ongoing review and improvement.
- b) As specified by TEQSA's course accreditation standards: "The academic standards intended to be achieved by students and the standards achieved by students in the course of study are benchmarked against similar accredited courses of study offered by other higher education providers."

13. The Nature of Moderation

- a) The minimum requirement at IHM is that moderation of all learning materials and assessments for each Unit will be undertaken at least once per year.
- b) IHM has three phases for moderation such as pre-delivery moderation; moderation during delivery; post-delivery moderation.

14. Pre-Delivery Moderation

- a) Moderation of Unit learning materials involves a comprehensive analysis of the content of the Unit Outline across all Unit offerings, including:
 - a. The appropriateness of all learning materials to the assumed knowledge for the unit and the level of the award.
 - b. The currency and suitability of the learning materials, as well as the clarity and tone of the communication with students.
 - c. An appraisal of the relation between the unit and the intended course learning outcomes.
 - d. An appraisal of the extent to which previous moderation reviews, feedback, and comments have been addressed.
- b) Review of assessment tasks reaffirms the fairness, clarity, and standards of the assessment tasks before they are used.
- c) Assessment tasks will be subject to pre-assessment moderation to ensure that:
 - a. They are appropriately aligned with the learning outcomes of the course of study.
 - b. Assessments are fair and feasible, take into consideration adjustments that may be required for students with disabilities and that reasonable weighting are applied for each task.
 - c. Assessments are appropriately spaced throughout the study period and achievable by students in the allocated timeframe.
 - d. Assessment content and instructions are presented using plain English, so that students understand what is required of them to achieve a given grade, in accordance with the Assessment Principles Policy.
 - e. The academic challenge they demand of students is consistent with the level of the award for the course.

15. Moderation During Delivery

- a) Moderation during delivery includes checking the consistency of marking of the assessment tasks and grading process against the assessment/marking criteria and related standards to ensure consistency across groups of students in the same unit, as well as reviewing all grades before approval and communication to students.

16. Post-Delivery Moderation

- a) Post-Delivery moderation is an examination of the effectiveness of the moderation process and includes a formal reflection on moderation methods used.

17. The Frequency of Moderation of the Three Phases

- a) Internal Pre-Delivery, During-Delivery, and Post-Delivery moderation should be carried out at least once per year for each Unit.

SECTION 3

Associated information

Related Internal Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy • Academic Honesty and Integrity Procedure • Assessment Policy • Assessment Procedure • Benchmarking Policy • Benchmarking Procedure • Course Design and Development Policy • Course Design and Development Procedure • Course Review and Evaluation Policy • Course Review and Evaluation Procedure • Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy • Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure • IHM Benchmarking Document template • IHM Course Curriculum Template • IHM Course Proposal Template (IHM-CPT) • IHM Mapping Document Template • IHM Session Plan Template • Learning and Teaching Plan • Learning and Teaching Policy • Learning and Teaching Procedure • Moderation and Validation Procedure • Student Assessment and Examination Policy • Student Assessment and Examination Procedure
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Selection and Admission Policy • Student Selection and Admission Procedure • Unit Guide Template
Related Legislation, Standards, and Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Qualifications Framework (2013) • Higher Education Support Act (2003) • Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 • National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (2018) • Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Act (2011)
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Change history

Version Control		Version 4
Change Summary	Date	Short description of the change, incl version number, changes, who considered, approved etc
	02/12/2020 Version 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added rubric, standards, Summative assessment, to the definition • Reworded subjects to units • Replaced Director, QA with Academic Dean • version 3, approved by Academic Board on 02/12/2020
	03/08/2022 Version 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wells Advisory provided a review of all Course Design and related policies and procedures (May 2022) • Version 3 amended as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor edits to definitions • Aligned to HESF 2021 standards • Approved by Academic Board on 03/08/2022