

MODERATION POLICY

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Policy Lead	Academic Dean
Approving Authority	Board of Directors
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Version	2024.1
Relevant legislation or external requirements	National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESFs: 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 1.4.1, 1.4.3, 5.3.7) Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act) Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
Related ASA Documents	Benchmarking Policy Quality Assurance Framework Student Assessment Policy Student Assessment Procedure Diversity and Equity Policy and Procedure Records and Information Management Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose

ASA Institute of Higher Education (**ASA**) is committed to maintaining the highest level of academic standards. The principles of moderation outlined in this policy underpin ASA's broader processes of academic quality assurance that maintain continuous improvement and ensure that standards of student learning and assessment of learning outcomes are consistent with the level set out by the Australian Qualification Framework (**AQF**). This Policy helps promote fair, consistent, and transparent practices, and foster staff compliance with moderation strategies.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all courses and units offered by ASA.

3. Principles

Moderation is to ensure that:

- Course and unit materials provided to students contain clearly stated learning outcomes and current learning resources, and that students understand what is expected to complete satisfactorily the requirements of courses/units.
- Unit assessment tasks are stated unambiguously, consistent with the internal and external accepted curriculum principles for the course and the learning outcomes for the unit, and that they are appropriately and fairly weighted and are applied consistently.
- Everyone involved in delivery and assessment has a shared understanding of the *Student Assessment Policy* and associated procedure and will make informed assessment judgements that are transparent and applied consistently to all students.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
academic quality assurance	A framework that provides principles and processes directed to ensure the academic quality aligns with the overall strategic planning and policy of the provider.
assessment (verb)	Assessment is the process for comparing practices, processes or performance outcomes between the ASA and other higher education providers. Its purpose is to identify comparative strengths and weaknesses, as a basis for developing improvements in academic quality or performance. Benchmarking can also be defined as a quality process used to evaluate performance by comparing institutional practices with identified good practices across the sector.
assessment task	A learning task within a unit of study designed to test the demonstration of course and unit learning outcomes. Examples include essay, report, reflection, quiz, assignment, exam, practical task, workplace learning task, role play, portfolio, project or presentation. Assessment tasks will include clear instructions and guidelines on marking criteria and standards, and assessment criteria.
benchmarking	An external referencing activity that typically consists of focused improvement through relationships with a benchmarking partner or partners, but can also include comparing course design against publicly-available information and market intelligence. Benchmarking may vary depending on context. For example, in the context of course accreditation, benchmarking involves comparing performance outcomes and/or processes of similar courses of study delivered by other providers. 'Internal benchmarking' against other relevant courses offered by the provider may also be undertaken.
course and unit review	Is the evaluation of an academic program, including its structure, learning outcomes, currency of curriculum and quality of teaching and learning (including assessment).
external moderators	Are academic staff from other higher education providers or professionals with expertise in the unit area who can provide independent review and moderation of the unit or assessment processes, where the internal moderation process indicates that there are substantial problems in the design or delivery of a unit.
internal moderators	Are academic colleagues from ASA with experience and expertise in the unit area but not involved directly in the writing of the unit or assessment setting and/or marking process of the unit being moderated.
moderation	Moderation is a Quality Assurance methodology, controlling processes and activities such as peer review that aim to assure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. consistency or comparability, appropriateness, and fairness of assessment judgments 2. the validity and reliability of assessment tasks, criteria and standards. Moderation of assessment processes establishes comparability of standards of student performance across, for example, different markers, locations, subjects, providers, and/or courses of study.
pre-assessment moderation	Validates the appropriateness, fairness, clarity, accuracy and standard of assessment tasks and materials before they are used for assessment.
post-assessment moderation	Checks marking by moderating a designated sample of marked student work to ensure that markers are making consistent and accurate assessment decisions in accordance with published assessment criteria.
summative assessment	An assessment task the mark for which contributes to the final grade in a unit.

5. The Objectives of Moderation

Moderation seeks to ensure that:

- the academic staff comply with the *Student Assessment Policy* and associated procedure,
- standards to be achieved by students are transparent, widely understood and observed,
- learning tasks, activities and assessments are consistent with stated learning outcomes and are set at the appropriate Australian Qualification Framework (**AQF**) level for the award, and
- assessment procedures and practices are fair, culturally appropriate and incorporate clearly defined assessment and marking criteria that are fairly and consistently applied for all students in the same course and unit.

6. The Nature and Definition of Moderation

The minimum requirement at ASA is that moderation of all learning materials and assessments for each unit be undertaken at least once per year, taking into account course learning outcomes.

ASA has three moderation phases, pre-delivery moderation, moderation during delivery and post-delivery moderation.

6.1 Pre-delivery Moderation

6.1.1 Unit Pre-delivery moderation

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 the learning materials, including prescribed texts and web-based resources, 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, and
- d. an appraisal of the extent to which previous moderation reviews, feedback and comments have been addressed.

6.1.2 Assessment Pre-delivery moderation

Review of assessment tasks reaffirms the fairness, clarity, and standards of the assessment tasks before they are used. Assessment tasks will be subject to pre-assessment moderation to ensure that:

- a. they are appropriately aligned with the learning outcomes of the unit,
- b. assessments are fair and feasible, culturally appropriate, take into account consideration of adjustments that may be required for students needing reasonable adjustment, and that reasonable weightings are applied for each task,
- c. they are appropriately spaced throughout the study period and achievable by students in the allocated timeframe,
- d. their content and instructions are presented clearly, using plain English, so that students understand what is required of them in order to achieve a given grade, in accordance with assessment and marking criteria, and

- e. the academic challenge they demand of students is consistent with the level of the award for the course.

6.2 Moderation during Delivery

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

6.3 Post-delivery Moderation

Unit marks and grades are reviewed by the Unit Coordinators to ensure that all assessment tasks marks are entered, and all summative assessments have been moderated and any adjustments to marks have occurred as a result of the moderation process.

At the end of each study period, a moderation report is presented to the Board of Examiners by the Course Coordinator of a review the unit performance and materials highlighting what worked well, identifying any issues and make recommendations on necessary changes or updates are required prior to next delivery.

Post-assessment moderation involves the review of allocation of marks according to the data including:

- Normal or skewed distribution
- Large number of failures
- Large number of students receiving the same grade
- Discrepancies between grades allocated to individual students in different units
- Substantial number of students not submitting or late submissions.

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

6.4 Benchmarking or External Referencing

Courses and units will be benchmarked regularly against similar accredited courses offered by other higher education providers to ensure comparability of standards and to gain feedback for ongoing review and improvement. For further information regarding Benchmarking and External Referencing, refer to the *Benchmarking Policy* and related procedure.

7. Responsibilities and Reporting

7.1 Academic Staff

Academic staff are responsible for:

- Participating in moderation activities, providing qualitative and quantitative data to support assessment decisions as required,
- Familiarise themselves and complying with the moderation process and the ***Student Assessment Policy*** and associated procedure.

7.2 Unit Coordinators

Unit Coordinators are responsible for:

- Leading and managing moderation activities,

- Cultivating an appreciation amongst staff and students of moderation as a way of enhancing assessment practices and outcomes,
- Resolving any disputed moderation or escalate to the Course Coordinator or Academic Dean if the dispute cannot be resolved,
- Prepare moderation reports and present to the Board of Examiners, and
- Report to the required Governing Committees on the moderation process, findings and any actions taken.

7.3 Course Coordinators and Academic Dean

The Course Coordinators and Academic Dean are responsible for:

- Monitoring moderation activities,
- Ensuring that moderation activities are adequately resourced,
- Take final responsibility as part of the Board of Examiners for the adjustment, allocation, ratification and reporting of grades, and
- Report findings from the Board of Examiners to the Academic Board.

7.4 Governing Committees

The Governing Committees' responsibilities can be found in the Governance Charter

8. Relevant HESFs

As a registered education provider, ASA operates under various laws and regulations. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with such laws.

This Policy and the associated Procedure comply with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021. The following are relevant excerpts and specify that:

Standard 1.3 Orientation and Progression [...]

2. Specific strategies support transition, including:
 - a. assessing the needs and preparedness of individual students and cohorts
 - b. undertaking early assessment or review that provides formative feedback on academic progress and is able to identify needs for additional support, and
 - c. providing access to informed advice and timely referral to academic or other support.
3. Methods of assessment or monitoring that determine progress within or between units of study or in research training validly assess progress and, in the case of formative assessment, provide students with timely feedback that assists in their achievement of learning outcomes.

Standard 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment

1. The expected learning outcomes for each course of study are specified, consistent with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded and informed by national and international comparators. [...]
3. Methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, can confirm that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.

Standard 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement

7. The results of regular interim monitoring, comprehensive reviews, external referencing, and student feedback are used to mitigate future risks to the quality of the education

provided and to guide and evaluate improvements, including the use of data on student progress and success to inform admission criteria and approaches to course design, teaching, supervision, learning and academic support.

9. Version Control

This Policy has been reviewed and approved by the ASA Board of Directors as at December 2023 and is reviewed every three years.

This Policy, and the associated Procedure, are published and available on ASA website <https://www.asahe.edu.au/policies-and-forms/>.

Change and Version Control				
Version	Authored by	Brief Description of the changes	Date Approved:	Effective Date:
2024.1	Quality and Policy Officer	Document formatting updated to reflect change of Trading Name to ASA Institute of Higher Education.	28/06/2024 by CEO	01/07/2024
2023.1	Director Learning and Innovation	Updated policy to include HESF references, changes in regulatory compliances. Benchmarked against 6 other Higher Education Providers.	12/12/2023	18/12/2023
Previous version archived. New Policy code and numbering system implemented.				
3.0		Annual review – Academic Board approval	14/07/2021	
2.0		New course accreditation		
1.0		Council approval		