



**EXCELSIA**  
**COLLEGE**  
— Sydney —

### **Objects of Excelsia College**

Motivated by the Christian faith, as expressed by the Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed, with fidelity to the Scriptures as the Word of God, the Objects of the College are the advancement of the Christian faith and higher education.

### **Document number**

**PO-STU-10**

### **Document name**

**MODERATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **Document status**

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Approving Authority	Academic Board	April 2015
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## 1 Policy statement

Excelsia College understands moderation to be a process for facilitating and developing consistency of, and comparability between, assessment judgements made in a range of assessment contexts against differing assessment criteria. The focus of the moderation process is to assure and enhance the quality and accuracy of assessment by systematic examination of the validity, reliability, and plausibility of grades with respect to College standards, unit learning objectives, course outcomes, and assessment criteria.

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## 2 Scope

This policy applies to the College staff and students.

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## 3 Responsibility

Moderation is a multi-stage, collaborative effort between senior Excelsia academics, teaching staff, external academics, boards and committees, and student administration. Each of these participants has specific roles to play in the moderation process. Key moderation roles are outlined below.

### Chief Academic Officer and Registrar

- Take final responsibility for the adjustment, allocation, and reporting of grades, in keeping with internal and external moderation and benchmarking arrangements.
- Monitor moderation activities within and across schools and courses.
- Ensure that moderation activities are adequately resourced.
- Monitor structural and administrative arrangements pertaining to moderation, and their impact on moderation activities, reviewing and adjusting such arrangements as and where necessary.
- Include consideration of academic moderation outcomes in performance review processes as appropriate (Chief Academic Officer).
- Prepare moderation reports (Registrar).
- Work with Heads to monitor the implementation of Moderation Committee Report recommendations (Chief Academic Officer).

### Heads of Schools and Program Coordinators

- Lead and manage School-based moderation activities.
- Cultivate an appreciation amongst staff and students of moderation as a way of enhancing assessment practice and outcomes.
- Monitor assessment arrangements influencing the effectiveness of moderation, ensuring that the Chief Academic Officer is made aware of matters requiring attention.
- In consultation with the Chief Academic Officer, address academic and administrative issues, problems or concerns identified during moderation processes.

### Academic staff

- Participate in moderation activities, providing qualitative and quantitative data to support assessment decisions as required.
- Contribute to a climate of openness by offering and receiving discipline-specific and assessment-based advice and expertise.
- Develop an awareness of assessment arrangements influencing the effectiveness of moderation and ensure the Head of School and Chief Academic Officer are aware of any matters requiring attention.

### External moderators

- Monitor, and provide advice on, the validity and credibility of assessment methods and instruments.
- Monitor, and provide advice on, standards of assessment and the appropriateness of assessment decisions.
- Monitor, and provide advice on, moderation processes and procedures.
- Provide any other commentary or advice as may be necessary or appropriate to enhance the quality of assessment, grading and moderation across the College.

### Committees

- The Moderation Committee is the sub-committee of the Learning and Teaching Committee tasked with the moderation of assessment practices and outcomes in accordance with this policy.
- The Learning and Teaching Committee is the sub-committee of the Academic Board responsible for the management of the College's learning and teaching activities. It is tasked with reviewing the Moderation Committee Report and School results forwarded by the Registrar prior to accepting them or requesting further moderation.
- The Academic Board deliberates on the outcomes of the semester's assessment and moderation activities, advising on and endorsing processes and outcomes as appropriate.

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## 4 Definitions

There are no specific definitions for this policy.

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## 5 Principles

Excelsia College is committed to:

- a. maintaining a moderation process for facilitating and developing consistency of, and comparability between, assessment judgements made in a range of assessment contexts against differing assessment criteria.
- b. ensuring the moderation process assures and enhances the quality and accuracy of assessment through systematic examination of the validity, reliability, and plausibility of

grades with respect to College standards, unit learning objectives, course outcomes, and assessment criteria.

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## 6 Assessment, moderation and approval procedures

An overview of assessment, moderation and approval procedures is provided below. These procedures are supported by, and consistent with, relevant College policies, procedures, and guidelines.

### Assessment

1. Standards of assessment are, in consultation with internal and external academics, established by the Chief Academic Officer for each AQF Qualification Level, and published in various locations, e.g. in the Staff Handbook, course unit regulations, sample assessment matrices, exemplar essays, and nominal grading distributions.
2. Heads of School and Program Coordinators (in consultation and collaboration with the Chief Academic Officer as appropriate) make standards of assessment clear to academic staff through staff meetings, professional development events and written communications.
3. Heads of School and Program Coordinators (in consultation and collaboration with the Chief Academic Officer as appropriate) ensure that assessments published in course unit outlines are consistent with College and AQF standards, contain detailed assessment criteria, and are consistent with course and unit learning outcomes and College Graduate Attributes.
4. Academic staff mark students' submitted work according to unit assessment criteria, published assessment rubrics, and agreed College standards.

### School-based moderation

1. At the end of each semester Heads/Directors and academic staff from each School meet to discuss assessment. The purpose of this meeting is to review assessment processes, procedures, and tasks – identifying where possible, deficiencies in assessment or inconsistencies in marks and modifying such marks as necessary.
2. As part of their internal moderation, Schools ensure that all elements of the grade spreadsheet are properly completed prior to being submitted to the Moderation Committee. Where Schools need further clarification or guidance, they should consult with the Academic Registrar to resolve these issues prior to submitting the grades.
3. Schools should include a process whereby the lecturers are required to submit comments to them at the end of each semester for all students who have failed or where one of the non-passing grades is submitted (this includes Incomplete, Unavailable, Withdrawn Fail, and Extension). Comments within the grade spreadsheet should explain the reason for failing, as well as any attempts and efforts that have been made by the lecturer and/or School to intervene with the student and support them. For example, comment that the student was contacted by phone or email, that they met with the Head of School, whether an extension or supplementary assessment was proposed, etc.

4. Schools should thoroughly check the grade calculations prior to or during their internal moderation meeting and seek support from the Learning Systems Administrator if they are having trouble with this aspect in the ExO gradebook. Schools are required to check the grade calculations for the upcoming semester *before* the semester begins (or at the very least prior to the first assessment submission) to ensure they are correct.
5. On the basis of its deliberations, the school-based moderation meeting makes a recommendation to the Moderation Committee that the assessment results as amended be accepted as a true and accurate reflection of the academic performance of students in the given semester.
6. Schools should ensure that they send the grade spreadsheet to the Moderation Committee for review a minimum three days before the Committee meeting. In cases where grades cannot be provided early enough, the meeting should be rescheduled at the discretion of the Committee.
7. Marks and unit grades (as amended) are then presented to a formal Moderation Committee meeting including the Head/Director, School academic staff, an external moderator, the Chief Academic Officer, Registrar and Director of Quality. The Registrar is responsible for the collation, capture, presentation, integrity and privacy of marks and grades across all units offered in each semester.

### **Moderation Committee meeting**

1. The Moderation Committee reviews the results provided by the schools at the end of their internal moderation meeting. These are provided a minimum three days prior to the scheduled meeting time, to allow the committee members time to reflect on and assess the results.
2. Each committee member analyses the results, checking specifically on the following areas:
  - a. Range and spread of grades for assessment and unit total (CAO)
  - b. Submission of each assessment (Registrar)
  - c. Attendance (CAO)
  - d. Special Consideration (Registrar)
  - e. Valid explanation of grades (fail, withdrawn, extension, etc.) (Quality)
  - f. Valid explanation of grade moderation (borderline grades) (Quality)
  - g. Consistency of marks where multiple lecturers have delivered/graded the same unit (CAO)
3. Amendments to marks and grades are made and documented in the context of the formal Moderation Committee meeting as appropriate. Other information (e.g. reasons for grades awarded, notes on student progression, etc.) pertinent to assessment and moderation is also confirmed at the meeting.

### **Between-School moderation**

1. The Moderation Committee takes the amended results and recommendations from each formal School moderation meeting and compares these results across Schools. This cross-school comparison recognises that:
  - a. Marks, unit grades and (ultimately) qualifications are awarded by the College not any individual marker or School.
  - b. Heads of School, Program Coordinators and academic staff have a potential conflict of interest with respect to the awarding of marks and grades.
  - c. Students should not be unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged by idiosyncratic marking philosophies or practices that may arise from time to time in a given School or Schools.
2. On the basis of cross-school comparisons (which include descriptive and inferential statistical analyses of within- and between-School marks and grades), the Moderation Committee may make additional adjustments to marks and/or grades in order to ensure within-School consistency and between-School comparability of grades.

### **Approval of grades**

1. Grades as amended and confirmed by the Moderation Committee are presented to the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) for review and comment. At this stage the LTC may question and/or comment on any of the processes and/or results of any within- or between-School moderations of grades. On the basis of its deliberations, the LTC accepts assessment results as a true and accurate reflection of the academic performance of students in the given semester.
2. Once approved by the LTC, grades awarded for a given semester are made available to students by the Registrar.
3. The Academic Board receives moderation summaries from the LTC and reviews moderation processes and procedures as appropriate.

### **Procedures for the appointment of external moderators**

1. External moderators must be academics from higher education institutions within Australia.
2. External moderators must be academically qualified at least one level above the qualification being moderated.
3. Heads of Schools are responsible for identifying and recommending external moderators.
4. The Head of School submits a list of the external moderators to the Moderation Committee.
5. External moderators are approved by the Moderation Committee.
6. A letter of appointment is issued to each external moderator by the Head of School.
7. External moderators will normally be changed at least every three years.

## Post-Moderation Meeting

1. A second meeting will take place with each School later in the semester, to be known as a Post-Moderation Meeting. This meeting is designed to take place midway through the following semester, with the purpose of:
  - a. confirming that all action items arising from the Moderation Committee meeting have been completed
  - b. ensuring that any amendments to grades made after the external moderation meeting have been correctly made and reflected in the system – both Paradigm and ExO.
  - c. reviewing the results of the previous semester with the results of previous iterations of the units
  - d. discussing improvements that can be made to the teaching of the unit by reflecting on the results and any issues that have been identified throughout the moderation process (continuous improvement).

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## 7 Related documents and references

- Student Handbook
- PPR-STU-01 Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual which combines WP-STU-27 Assessment Policy and Procedure, STU-G18 Explanation of Grades and PO-STU-03 Assessment Policy
- STA-G27 Inclusive Assessment, Making Reasonable Adjustments and Providing Alternative Assessment Arrangements

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## 8 Mapped to HESF

The content of this policy is mapped to the HESF 1 Student Participation and Attainment.

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## 9 Document history

This policy has been amended as follows:

Version	Amendments / Date / Notes
7	Approved AB Aug 2021. Process has been clarified and included instructions for filling in grade spreadsheets and additional comments. A post moderation process for meetings was added. Staff titles and committee names have been updated.