Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedure

Approved by the Academic Board on 17 February 2022

1.   Purpose

This Policy establishes minimum requirements for moderation of assessment conducted at Iona Trinity College of Higher Education (**the College**).

2.   Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All staff involved in the delivery of course(s) offered by the College

- All units in all courses.

3.   Policy

3.1   Principles

The College establishes guidelines and requirements for the moderation of formal assessment of student learning through this Policy. This Policy is reviewed and approved by the Academic Board.

Assessment moderation is conducted to ensure assessment tasks and marking criteria are:

- Clearly expressed and aligned with the relevant learning outcomes as specified in the individual Unit Outline

- Appropriate to the level of the unit within the course, taking into consideration assumed learning

- Consistent with other (external) curriculum in the unit discipline (achieved through a process of expert consultation and benchmarking)

- Appropriately and fairly weighted and graded.

Assessment moderation is a cycle of internal or external analysis conducted prior to, during and after delivery of a unit.

Moderation applies to written assignments with a weighted percentage above twenty (20) per cent of that unit's overall assessment as well as to any written examination, excluding multiple-choice examinations. Moderation is also conducted on the provisional grades collated for each unit prior to certification of grades.

To broaden the scope and reliability of the moderation process, in the first year of the College's operation, 50 per cent of the units offered in each course will be externally moderated. After the first year of operation, at least one third of the units offered will be moderated externally each year. The Academic Board may nominate additional unit(s) for external moderation as and when required.

Unit moderators in the relevant language, internal or external, are nominated by Course Coordinators and ratified by the Principal.

4.   Procedure

4.1   Pre-assessment Moderation

Pre-assessment moderation certifies the relevance of assessment tasks against course learning outcomes and graduate attributes and occurs prior to a unit being delivered and whenever a unit of study is modified.

The Course Coordinator with input from another member of academic teaching staff will prepare a pre-assessment moderation report at the commencement of the teaching period in which the unit (or modified unit) is to be first delivered. A Pre-assessment Moderation template is at Attachment 1.

The purpose of the pre-assessment moderation report is to ensure that:

- Tasks are appropriately aligned to the learning outcomes and assessment requirements listed in the Unit Outline

- Assessment is valid, reliable, and fair

- Task content and instructions are clearly and accurately presented

- The academic challenge presented for the student is consistent with the level of the unit

- The assessment aligns with the College's *Assessment Policy and Procedure*

- Any prior moderation outcomes have been addressed

- All learning materials are current and suitable, and

- All resources required for the assessment task are available.

4.2   Post-assessment Moderation

Grades for all assessment tasks is subject to post-assessment moderation for each unit to ensure consistent and valid assessment decisions in accordance with the College's *Assessment Policy and Procedure* and published assessment criteria in the Unit Outlines.

On the completion of all assessment items for a term of study and prior to the communication of final grades to students, a Moderation Team, comprising of the Course Coordinator and academic teaching staff, will review the assessment results for all units in their specific course for:

- The accuracy of data entry of results, and

- The distribution of marks across assessment tasks and across different student cohorts.

The Moderation Team will consider samples from students studying a unit in each teaching period to determine the fairness of the application of the assessment criteria for all students, the appropriateness of the assessment scheme and all summative assessment items for students in a unit of study.

The Moderation Team will ensure that:

- The standard of achievement is consistent, particularly for units being delivered to different groups of students by different staff;

- Assessment is consistent through 'double-marking' a sample of submitted tasks.

Where the same unit is offered across different courses, post-assessment moderation will be common across all courses to ensure consistency of standards.

A post-assessment moderation report with findings and recommendations will be prepared. The Course Coordinator will ensure that any necessary actions (such as re-marking or the amendment of grades) are taken before confirming the provisional results for the teaching period.

The Moderation Team will also prepare a report on assessment results for all units in the relevant course, which will be submitted to the Principal. The report will include:

- An evaluation of the distribution of marks

- Any adjustments to marks

- Any recommendations for change to assessment tasks and/or relevant feedback to markers

- An assessment of the equivalence of student results with other comparable units' external to the College.

The Principal will review the Course Coordinators' assessment reports to ensure that the standard of achievement is internally and externally consistent, particularly for units being delivered to different groups of students by different staff.

Following the Principal's review, all assessment reports will be submitted to the Teaching and Learning Committee to certify all grades. No exam marks will be released until after the moderation and certification of grades.

Final grades will be made available to students through the College's Learning Management System.

External benchmarking of assessment tasks and processes is encouraged and supported at the College through peer-review processes undertaken with academic staff in relevant disciplines at similar higher education providers, under the provisions of the *Benchmarking Policy and Procedur*e.

4.3   Reporting on Moderation

The Course Coordinator will maintain a record of the outcomes of:

- Any pre-assessment moderation undertaken. The record will contain information on the assessment tasks moderated and the number and nature of changes to tasks arising from the moderation process.

- All post-assessment moderation. The record will contain information on the units moderated, the number of instances in which marking discrepancies were identified, follow-up actions, and recommendations for improvement.

Based on these records, the Course Coordinator will prepare a Moderation Report for the Teaching and Learning Committee at the end of each semester. The report, which will form part of the Teaching and Learning Committee's report to the Academic Board, will:

o Summarise the conduct and outcomes of both pre- and post-assessment moderation, including any comments or advice from unit moderators

o Highlight any improvements or amendments to assessment tasks or practices resulting from moderation activity.

The Academic Board will review and approve any recommendations for improvement included in the report for implementation.

The Principal will ensure that follow-up actions included in the report are completed within a reasonable timeframe and that recommendations for improvement are referred, or allocated, to the relevant roles within the College for implementation.

The Academic Board will monitor the conduct and outcomes of moderation across the College to ensure that the assessment moderation process is effective and is reflective of a continuous improvement culture.

4.4   Quality Assurance and Professional Development

The College will assure the quality of its moderation processes through benchmarking processes and professional development of academic staff.

Where possible, external academic expertise will be engaged to contribute to ongoing benchmarking of the College's standards of teaching and learning, assessment and processes of moderation.

Professional development opportunities for design, implementation and moderation of assessment will be provided to academic staff and included by Course Coordinators as required activities in the development plans of academic staff.

The Principal will include required professional development relating to moderation activities.

5.   Responsibilities

The Principal:

- Oversees the pre-assessment and post-assessment moderation processes undertaken across courses
- Confirms the nomination of unit moderators and identifies external expertise (in a specific discipline or language) to assist in assessment moderation, as required
- Submits final assessment reports to the Teaching and Learning Committee
- Reports the final outcomes of moderation activity to the Academic Board each semester, and
- Ensures that the outcomes of moderation activities inform continuous improvement of the College's processes, including integrating outcomes into course development and review processes.

The Course Coordinator is specifically responsible for:

- The nomination of a unit moderator for each unit of study, both for internal and external moderators, having regard to due independence of moderators
- Monitoring the pre-assessment and post-assessment moderation processes for their course
- Providing assurance to the Principal that all moderation activities have been undertaken diligently, competently, and with regard to the integrity of the course
- Ensuring that relevant academic staff associated with a unit are informed prior to the start of semester about assessment tasks, assessment criteria, marking and moderation procedures

The unit moderator is specifically responsible for:

- Undertaking moderation of any assessment tasks or exams as instructed by the Course Coordinator in accordance with this Policy and Procedure;
- Ensuring that assessment tasks and exams are marked fairly and consistently when compared with the sample benchmarking documents.

6.   Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy and Procedure, the following terms are defined as follows:

Certification of Grades	The process by which all grades are confirmed by the Teaching and Learning Committee following review and moderation
Moderation	The process of ensuring that assessment validly and reliably measures achievement of expected learning outcomes in a unit of study
Moderator	The person who is responsible for ensuring the quality of setting/marking of student assessment, who is not the person who originally set or marked the task
Post-assessment moderation	Ensures the accuracy of assessment decisions and consistency with published criteria through the review of a designated sample of marked student work
Pre-assessment moderation	Validates the appropriateness, fairness, clarity, accuracy and standard of assessment tasks and materials before they are used for assessment

7.   Version History

Version #	Changes	Approval Body	Approval Date
1.0	Original Version	Academic Board	17/02/22
2.0	Addition of supporting documents in the appendices	Academic Board	20/10/22

8.   Additional Information

Policy Status	Approved
Policy Owner	Principal
Next Review Date	3 years from Approval Date
Associated Internal Documents	Assessment Policy and Procedure Benchmarking Policy and Procedure
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021	Standards 1.3.3, 1.4.3, 1.4.4, 3.1.3 and 5.3.4
National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and	Not applicable

Training to Overseas Students 2018	
Other Applicable Legislation and Instruments	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency 2011

(For internal use only)

Appendix 1 – Pre-assessment Moderation Template

Instructions

The nominated unit moderator will prepare this pre-assessment moderation report and present it to the Course Coordinator at the commencement of the teaching period in which the unit (or modified unit) is to be first delivered.

The Criteria are to be scored according to the following:
1 = Basic
2 = Poor
3 = Average
4 = Good
5 = Very Good

Space is provided for comments to be inserted to justify the Score.

Pre-Assessment Moderation Report		
Unit Name:		
Unit Code:		
Teaching Period:		
Unit Level:		
Course Coordinator:		
Moderator:		
Date:		
Criteria	**Score**	**Comments**
Are tasks appropriately aligned to the learning outcomes and assessment requirements listed in the Unit Outline?		
Is the assessment valid, reliable, and fair?		
Are the task content and instructions clear, comprehensible, and accurately presented?		
Is the academic challenge presented for the student consistent with the level of the unit?		
Where appropriate and feasible, are assessment tasks within and between units integrated?		
Is the assessment consistent with the College's *Assessment Policy and Procedure*?		
Have any prior moderation outcomes been addressed?		
Are all learning materials current and suitable?		
Are all resources required for the assessment task available?		
Content Total	0	

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Appendix 2 – Post Assessment Moderation Template

Instructions

The unit moderator is to compile a post assessment moderation report, which contains 4 parts:

- Part 1 – Distribution of Marks.
    - o A separate table should be prepared for every class. For example, if there are three classes for the unit, then each class should have its own grade distribution
    - o The figures and assessment tasks are provided as examples to assist in using the Post Assessment Moderation Report
- Part 2 – Mark Adjustments
- Part 3 – Moderation
- Part 4 – Recommendations

The Post Assessment Moderation Report should be presented to the Course Coordinator within one week of the end of each teaching period.

Before confirming the provisional results for the teaching period, the Course Coordinator will ensure that any necessary actions (such as re-marking or the amendment of grades) are taken.

POST ASSESSMENT MODERATION REPORT
Unit Name:
Unit Code:
Teaching Period:
Unit Level:
Course Coordinator:
Moderator:
Date:

Part 1 – Distribution of Marks

Class 1 | Tutor Name: [INSERT NAME] | No. of Students = [INSERT NUMBER]

Grades	Assessment 1 Essay (Weighting 25%)		Assessment 2 Book Review (Weighting 25%)		Assessment 3	
High Distinction	5	20%				
Distinction	5	20%				
Credit	5	20%				
Pass	5	20%				
Fail	5	20%				
Total	25	100%				

Class 2 | Tutor Name: [INSERT NAME] | No. of Students = [INSERT NUMBER]

Grades	Assessment 1 Essay (Weighting 25%)		Assessment 2 Book Review (Weighting 25%)		Assessment 3	
High Distinction	5	20%				
Distinction	5	20%				
Credit	5	20%				
Pass	5	20%				
Fail	5	20%				
Total	25	100%				

Part 2 – Mark Adjustments

2.1 Were any marks adjusted for special consideration?	Yes / No

If yes, explain the reason

2.2 Were any marks adjusted for any other reason?	Yes / No

If yes, explain the reason

If the answer to questions 2.1 and 2.2 is 'Yes', ensure records are made in the student management system

Part 3 – Moderation

3.1 Were any assessments 'double-marked'?	Yes / No

If yes, explain how

3.2 Are results consistent with other comparable units outside the College?	Yes / No

If no, provide reasons

Part 4 – Recommendations

4.1 What recommendations do you have for change to assessment tasks?

4.2 What other feedback do you have for markers?