National Academy of Professional Studies (NAPS)
Moderation Policy and Procedures

Contents

1.   Policy Rationale

The National Academy of Professional Studies (NAPS) considers the moderation of its academic programs as a critical element of quality assurance in its operations as a non-self-accrediting institution. Accordingly, the rationale for this policy is to provide guidelines for moderating assessments of learning outcomes across the Academy and to ensure that the Academy meets the standards set in the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF).

2.   Overview and Application

Consistent with its mission to provide high-quality education programs and professionalism, the Academy is committed to the view that an effective regime of moderation ensures consistency in assessments and enables an efficient oversight of the alignment of course objectives and learning outcomes by comparison with other providers. This is also consistent with the statement by TEQSA that :

> *"The academic standards intended to be achieved by students and the standards actually achieved by students in the course of study are benchmarked against similar accredited courses of study offered by other higher education providers."*

It ultimately leads to good and improved standards that contribute to students' learning experience. The policy applies to all forms of assessment in the Academy. It is also applicable to all academic staff.

3.   Definitions

AQF: Australian Qualification Framework.

Benchmarking: an evaluation of any NAPS course, unit or assessment by comparison to similar practice in one or more higher education institutions.

Internal moderator: an academic staff member of NAPS who reviews an assessment set or conducted in the Academy by another academic staff member.

External moderator: an independent reviewer who is not a sessional or permanent academic employee of the Academy.

Moderation: the review of an assessment of student learning or performance to determine the quality of outcomes and consistency with similar standards.

Review: this is a comprehensive evaluation. It may be conducted at different level to deal with specific issues or aspects of the Academy. A review may cover the evaluation of course management and administration and may deal with issues such as: curricula and courses offered by the Academy; admission requirements; contact hours; assessment; award of credits. It may also cover the evaluation of the entire Academy including governance, management, staff, teaching programs and policies.

Standard: The measure ~~of quality~~ of quality and excellence of learning outcomes.

4. Procedure

4.1 Minimum Standards and Frequency

i. The Academy uses the AQF as the minimum standard. Accordingly, all moderation shall ensure that any assessment moderated meets the AQF standards. Content and assessment should also comply with any professional accreditation standards relevant to the course in question and other NAPS policies concerning teaching and learning.

i. ~~The Chair of the Academic board shall direct the relevant Deans to conduct external moderation of specific units on a rotational basis at least once in three years. .unitr.~~ ~~Where any unit is moderated, the grades in that unit shall not be released to students until the Dean has received the moderation report and provided his comments on that report to the Course Advisory Committee and the Chair of Academic Board.~~

4.2 Moderation Types and Reporting

i. Resources moderation:

    a. The learning resources and infrastructure available to students inform assessment tasks and learning outcomes. Accordingly, a preliminary step in moderation is a review of the teaching and learning resources that are available to staff and students in a unit. An essential element of this moderation process is the evaluation of unit outlines and the consistency of the information contained in the outlines. The evaluation shall also cover any online learning resources including PowerPoints, eBooks online quizzes, and any relevant student support material that impacts teaching and learning. **As a rule, an External Moderator shall conduct resource moderation.** The moderator may include a group of related units in conducting resource moderation. The moderator shall use benchmarks to inform the evaluation and any subsequent report.

ii. Unit grading moderation:

    a. Unit grading moderation involves the 'second marking' of a representative selection of scripts or assessments submitted by students in fulfillment of the unit requirements outlined in the unit outline for the trimester. It is usual practice for the representation of selected scripts to be representative of the unit grade distribution. As a rule, the Dean or nominee may appoint an academic staff member with expertise in the area to conduct the grading moderation. The Dean may also appoint an External Moderator if deemed necessary to conduct the moderation. The Dean shall ensure that external moderators are appointed for at least three units in a course every Academic Year. See section 4.4 related to the appointment of external moderators.

    a. In every instance of unit grading moderation, the moderation shall be based on an assessment rubric for the unit to ensure consistency and transparency. At the conclusion of the moderation, the Moderator shall provide a report to the Dean specifying any recommendations to the grades assigned with reasons. Where there are no or minor changes, the grades assigned by the lecturers will be accepted. Where there are major variations between the moderated results and the original results, the

Dean shall inform the Chair of the Academic Board and may order a remark of all scripts for that assessment in the unit by the External Moderator.

iii. Report to Academic Board

a. At the end of each trimester, the Chair of Academy Board shall make a formal report to the Board on any moderation conducted, noting the outcome of the moderation and actions to be taken, where relevant, to remedy any problems identified by the moderators. This report shall include completion of A006F Assessment Moderation Form. If no changes are recommended after moderation, the grades assigned will be given to the chair of the Academic Board without any such moderation report.

4.3 Moderation Principles

i. Moderation is an independent exercise and must be conducted without any interference or hindrance. It must aim to reflect student-learning outcomes consistent with the AQF and standards in Australian higher education. Whenever possible the Academy must benchmark its assessment standards and outcomes with other higher education institutions.

ii. The same principles of moderation should be applied whether a unit is taught by a single member of staff or whether multiple staff members deliver it. In the case of multiple staff engaged in the delivery and assessments undertaken, the unit coordinator will be responsible for the moderation of the grades in the entire unit. The moderation should always be based on the assessment rubric and the assessment regime as outlined in the course outline. This and the results of the learning outcomes assessment should then be benchmarked to ensure a fair and equitable treatment of the learning outcomes.

iii. Moderation may employ deferent methods including cross-marking of tasks and solution guides to ensure consistency.

4.4 Appointment of External Moderators

i. An External Moderators must be appointed by the Dean of a relevant department or school in the Academy in consultation with the Chair of Academic Board. To ensure that the Moderators liable to discharge his or her functions for the Academy, the Dean will provide the Moderator with all assistance needed to fulfil his or her role in ensuring that the learning outcomes and assessment criteria in the moderated unit are consistent and accurately reflect student achievement.

4.5 External Moderation Procedures for Units

i. In accordance with section 4.2 of this policy, the Dean of each department or school shall ensure that at least three units in a course are subject to external moderation in each academic year. The selection of units for moderation shall be governed by the following procedures.

ii. At the conclusion of the examinations in a given trimester, the Dean shall select any three units from a course for moderation by external moderators.

iii. A sample of scripts or assessment tasks submitted shall be selected from the nominated units. The selection of scripts shall represent the different grades awarded for the assessment in the unit. The selection of scripts shall not involve the assessor or instructor of the unit. Only assessment tasks worth 15% of more shall be subject to moderation.

iv. The moderations shall consider the following:

a. if assessments are aligned with the learning outcomes as specified in the subject outlines;

b. if the scope, length, and difficulty of the exam questions are appropriate and suited to addressing the learning outcomes and the graduate attributes provided by the unit outline;

c. if assessments are marked in line with marking guides and relevant rubrics without significant departures;

d. if assessment requirements are clearly articulated; and

e. if student performance is consistent with comparable higher education providers.

v. Given logistical issues, the external moderation of marks and grade distributions is necessarily post hoc in nature. Consequently, it informs subsequent assessment practices rather than alters the outcomes of the internal grading process conducted each trimester. The Dean or delegates will report the results of external moderation to the Course Advisory Committee and Academic Board outlining recommendations to enhance assessment regimes and protocols employed at NAPS.

4.6 Benchmarking

i. In accordance with section 4.5 of this policy, the results of the external moderation shall be benchmarked based on the NAPS Benchmarking Policy. The result of the benchmarking shall be included in the report to CAC and the Academic Board.

4.7 Course Review

i. Moderation is a critical element in NAPS quality assurance framework. A summary of every moderation conducted including the benchmarking shall be reported to the Academic Board. The report shall form an integral element of any Unit or Course Review and development of curriculum and future accreditation.

5. Policy Review

NAPS may make changes to this policy and procedures from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operations. In this regard, any staff member who wishes may make any contributions or comments should send them to the NAPS Chair of Academic Board.

6. Further Assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this policy should consult the Dean of the relevant department or school.

Document Details

Approving Committee/Body	Academic Board
Date of Initial Approval	16 May 2018
Date of Effect	1 November 2022
Review Schedule	Every 3 years from commencement
Policy Owner	Academic Board
Policy Contact	Chair of Academic Board
Delegated Actor (include if applicable)	Academic Board
Related Documents	A001 Academic Course & Unit Development Policy A004 Assessment Policy 025 Benchmarking Policy A006F Assessment Moderation Form
Applicability to Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (Cth	1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment 1.5 Qualifications and Certification 3.1 Course Design 3.3 Learning Resources and Educational Support 5. Institutional Quality Assurance 5.2 Academic and Research Integrity 6. Governance and Accountability 7.3 Information Management

Document History

Version	Author	Changes	Approval Date
1.0	Academic Board	Original Version	16 May 2018
2.0	Registrar	Delegations section ad	26 May 2025