INTERNAL MODERATION POLICY

Policy Owner:	Centre for Excellence Manager HE Co-ordinator
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Related Documentation

Title	Location	Owner
N/A		

Change Log

Location	Change from deletion/addition	Change to
Whole Document	Convert to standardised policy template	SWC standardised template
Page 7	Addition: to ensure that all level 6 dissertation projects are internally moderated and second marked	
6.0	Job roles were updated	
Page 9	If a concern is raised the Internal Moderator should discuss this with the Module Tutor	Discuss any concerns with the Module Tutor prior to the final
Page 9	Where re-sampling is necessary the work should be verified again and signatures obtained.	Verify work again where re-sampling is necessary and obtain signatures s
Review	Regularly	Biennially

Communication

Who needs to know (for action)	Senior Management Team Heads of Faculty Heads and Deputy Heads of School Course Coordinators Quality Manager The Quality Manager and Unit Students HLA Manager Higher Education Development Co-ordinator Examinations Officer
Who needs to be aware	All HE staff and Students

Communication Plan

Action	By Whom	By When
Upload to Gateway	J Lucas	On approval
Circulation to key staff	Liam Curran	On approval

Contents

1.   Introduction

This policy has been aligned to and meets the requirements of the revised UK Quality Code under Expectations for Standards and Quality. For further information, please click on the following link: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code. Internal moderation is an important college process in ensuring that assessors apply assessment criteria consistently and that assessment decisions are at the appropriate level to the Framework for Higher Education qualifications (FHEQ).

2.   Aims and Objectives

2.1   AIMS

South West College is committed to ensuring that standards of assessment are consistent, transparent and in line with the requirements of our awarding bodies. The way students' work is assessed must serve the stated learning objectives of the programmes we offer and facilitate the achievement and wider development of our students. Where appropriate course teams should adhere to awarding body moderation and moderation procedures as appropriate.

2.2   OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is:

- To assess students' work with integrity by being consistent and transparent in our assessment judgements and processes so that the outcomes are fair, reliable and valid.

- To ensure that assessment standards and specifications are implemented fully (both in spirit and in letter), so that no risk is posed to the reputation of the awarding bodies or the qualifications we offer.

- To establish quality control and recording mechanisms for assignments and their assessment through a system of sampling, moderation, internal verification and cross-departmental co-ordination as appropriate to the requirements of the programmes we offer.

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3. Policy Scope

3.1 The scope of the policy covers all Higher Education courses offered at South West College but may well apply to other assignment-based courses should they become a part of the curriculum in future. This should be read alongside the College's Assessment Policy and the College Policy on the Submission of Coursework.

4. Assessment

4.1 Internal assessment or curriculum-based assessment provides Module Tutors with the opportunity to monitor and evaluate learning as part of their teaching through specifically designed assessments aligned to learning outcomes. All College devised assessment materials must be internally and/or externally verified/moderated before being issued to students. The External Examiner process plays a critical role in this process that ensures academic standards are maintained.

- Completed student assignments will be assessed internally, and be subject to internal moderation and external moderation by the awarding body and/or the External Examiner (*not applicable to OU validated awards)*.

- Students must be left in no doubt that any grade awarded will be subject to internal and/or external scrutiny, (moderation) and that ultimately the final decision rests with the awarding body.

- The Assessor/Lecturer is responsible for ensuring that assessment processes are consistent and transparent, that evidence is valid, sufficient, authentic and that judgements of evidence is valid and reliable.

- Students will be given an interim deadline for each assignment which is agreed between the Module Tutor and the students to provide formative feedback. Following formative feedback a further summative deadline will be set after which the work is assessed and the outcome entered on the student study sheet. The assessment decisions are then internally verified according to according to College internal moderation procedures.

- All coursework must be handed in on the stated date. If work is handed in late, a decision about whether it should be marked will be taken by the Course Committee in accordance with the Submission of Coursework Policy and/or the requirements outlined in the Regulations for Validated awards of The Open University.

5.   Role of the Lecturer/Assessor

5.1   The role of the Lecturer/Assessor is to:

- Set tasks which allow students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do so that they have opportunities to achieve the highest possible grades on their particular course.

- Ensure that learners are clear about the criteria they are expected to meet in their assignments and that they are fully briefed on the skills which need to be demonstrated in the coursework / portfolio components of a subject.

- Encourage students by giving detailed feedback and guidance on how to improve work.

- Set interim deadlines for coursework and advise students on the appropriate amount of time to spend on the work, ensuring it is commensurate with the credit available.

- Mark and return drafts within 10 days of submission.

- Adhere to the Awarding Body's specification in the assessment of student assignments.

- Be responsible for recording all assessment outcomes which will be held secure for three years, measured from the point of certification. Associated Internal Moderator records should also be kept, to support and verify the decisions that were made for the cohort.

- Ensure each candidate signs to confirm that the work is their own and that it is endorsed by the teacher after marking the work. A completed original document must be securely attached to the work of each candidate and to that of each sample request.

- Provide accurate records of internally assessed coursework marks to the Examinations Office in a timely manner via the VLE or e-mail for transfer to the awarding body *(not applicable to OU validated awards)*.

5.2   Internal Moderation:
- The Internal Moderator is at the heart of the quality assurance process. The Internal Moderation role is to ensure that internally assessed work consistently meets standards of the programme.

- Each course will have an identified Internal Moderator (IM). The IM must not internally moderate their own work/units.

- Internal Moderators will have the knowledge and qualifications relevant to the qualification(s) and other competence-based award(s) for which they are responsible to enable accurate judgements to be made regarding candidate performance in relation to competence criteria.

- Provision should be made for opportunities to share 'best practice' and areas of concern between Course Teams. Typically, this will be achieved through an annual meeting of Internal Moderators at which standards and processes are discussed to maximise consistency between courses.

- For all programmes that are delivered on multiple College sites, Course Tutors must undertake collaborative assessment and moderation activities.

5.3   The role of the internal moderator:

The internal moderator should:
- Not verify their own work or assignments.

- Plan with the course team an annual internal moderator schedule linked to assignment plans assessments.

- Ensure that all assignment briefs are verified as fit for purpose prior to their being circulated to students. The assignment briefs should enable students to meet the unit grading criteria.

- Complete the internal moderation template and make recommendations to the assessor on how to improve the quality of the brief if necessary.

- Consider the assessment decisions of all units and all assessors to judge whether the assessor has assessed accurately against the module grading criteria.

- When **sampling,** sample size should be sufficient to assure the accuracy of the assessment decisions for the whole group. Effective sampling practice would include:

  o Cohorts under 10 all work should be internally moderated.
  o For cohorts over 10 a sample consisting of top, middle, top plus all board line passes and fails should be sufficient - ideally 10 scripts should be made available for moderation.
  o The Internal Moderator **mus**t select a sample based on the requirements stated above, but all cohort scripts should be made available to the **Second Marker/External Examiner** should they wish to sample further or alternative student work.
  o In the event of mark discrepancies and the appointment of a third reviewer, all cohort marks must be moderated.

- o To ensure quality and consistency, random samples of all final level (6) module assessments must be double marked. This will include all borderline work and fails. All level 6 dissertation/projects must be double Marked.
- o All double marking must be recorded and feedback should be provided to the Module Tutor along with any actions or recommendations.
- o For level 4 and 5 work a sample all assessments must be **second marked** according to the above sampling criteria.

- Discuss any concerns with the Module Tutor prior to the final confirmation of the marks for all the students taking the assignment. As a result of the Internal Moderation process it may be necessary for the Module Tutors to reconsider the marks awarded for the entire cohort of students and, as a consequence, to make changes either to all marks or to some marks.

- Maintain secure records of all work sampled as part of their moderation process using a standard template.

- Verify work again where re-sampling is necessary and obtain signatures.

In cases where double-marking has taken place, irresolvable differences can occur on individual marks and/or the overall level of marks. In such cases the relevant Course Director shall nominate a third tutor to review all cohort assessment marks. This may be a more senior member of staff or a fellow academic tutor with sufficient subject specialism. The third tutor makes recommendations to the Course Director, who then takes a decision based on all three tutors' marks and comments.

The Course Directors decision is final in that it is their decision which is forwarded to External Examiners as he set of internal marks. In the event that a Course Director has acted as a 1st or 2nd marker, the 3rd tutor must make the final decision regarding the marks awarded.

All moderation activity must be recorded and actions for consideration by the wider course team should be noted, along with a rationale for the adjustment of cohort marks.

5.4   Investigating Student Misconduct

There will be an investigation if student misconduct is suspected which may lead to disciplinary action.

- Students who attempt to gain an award by deceitful means will automatically have their result(s) suspended (held) pending a thorough investigation by a member of the Course Committee. The student will be informed at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences.

- The outcome of the investigation will determine the appropriate course of action to be taken by the College. Malpractice is a breach of College rules and may invoke the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Any case where student malpractice is found to be substantiated will be reported to the awarding body.

- Malpractice is a breach of College rules and may invoke the South West College Plagiarism Policy. Any case where student malpractice is found to be substantiated will be reported to the awarding body. As effective practice all Module Tutors and Course Teams are encouraged to adopt the Plagiarism Reference Tariff or 'AMBeR Tariff' as good practice. https://www.plagiarism.org/assets/Tennant_referencetariff-1506356085.pdf

- If no evidence is found that the student cheated, then the benefit of the doubt should be given to the student and the grade achieved should be awarded.

5.5   South West College Academic Assessment Appeals Procedure.

6.   **Responsibility**

- Policy Owner: Centre for Excellence Manager, Higher Education.

- Responsible for Implementation: Course Directors, IMs and Heads of School and Heads of Faculty.

6.1 It is the responsibility of Module Tutor to:

- Provide assessment processes that are fair and meet the requirements of students and of the qualification.

- Provide students with a schedule of assessment.

- Provide accurate, timely and informative assessment feedback to inform Students of their individual progress and tell them what they need to do to improve.

- Record assessment decisions regularly, accurately and systematically, using agreed documentation.

- Comply with the College and Awarding Body guidelines regarding work that is submitted after the submission date and work that is re-submitted following a referral decision.

- Familiarise themselves and learners with the College Assessment Appeals procedure(s).

- Be aware of and keep up-to-date with Awarding Body guidance in respect of assessment, standardisation, moderation and verification.

- Ensure that the quality of assessment is assured by carrying out internal standardisation, moderation or moderation as required by the College and Awarding Body.

- Record internal standardisation, moderation and moderation decision accurately and systematically using agreed documentation.
- Provide special arrangements for learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities according to the regulations of the awarding body.

6.2   Internal Moderators are responsible for:

- Verifying with the External Examiner assignment briefs prior to distribution to students *(F 2.3 of the Handbook for Validated Awards, Pg78)*.

- Verifying a sample of assessment decisions.

- Developing the skills of Lecturer assessors, especially those new to assessment.

- Maintaining the consistency of assessment decisions by holding standardisation meeting of assessors.

6.3   It is the responsibility of the Examinations Office:

- To meet the deadlines for registering learners with the awarding body.

- To ensure that awarding body data is kept up to date with timely withdrawal or transfer of learners.

- To claim students' certificates as soon as appropriate.

- To claim unit certification when a learner has not been able to complete the full programme of study.

- Where appropriate to communicate with the awarding bodies.

6.4   It is the responsibility of the Quality & Performance Manager to:

- Act as Quality Nominee for the College, to act as a conduit for information from awarding bodies to course teams, and to ensure standardisation of processes and documentation across the programmes

7.   Access to Policy

- Copies of the policy will be available via the VLE.

- Student induction programmes and course handbooks will highlight key aspects of this policy.

- Training for tutors/assessors will be given as part of staff induction if necessary.

8.   Monitoring and Review

8.1   The College will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of this Policy.

8.2   The College will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote this Policy effectively and is committed to reviewing this Policy on a biennial basis, in consultation with the recognised trade unions, statutory organisations such as the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and in line with models of good practice.

Signed Chief Executive

Date   12.01.22

Signed Chair of the Board of Governors

Date   12/01/2022

Appendix 1 - Glossary

Assessment criteria - those topics/aspects of a subject area that a marker would expect to be included in the piece of work being assessed including any apportionment of marks to the various elements of an assessment.

Moderation - the checking of a sample of students' assessed work in order to confirm that the assessment and marking criteria have been applied so that relative grading is appropriate. Note that moderation is a normative rather than a criterion-referenced process and, as such, does not apply to vocational programmes such as BTEC and NVQ.

Assessment - Assessment is where College staff makes judgements on the assessment evidence produced by students against the required standards for the qualification.

Verification - is the process by which the College and the awarding body ensure that national standards are consistently applied to the assessment of students.

Internal Verification - ensures that assessment decisions are made against specific criteria, are accurate and to the national standard.

External Verifier - a person appointed by warding bodies to monitor the work of approved centres and ensures the consistency and quality of local assessments.

Moderator - one whose role is to ensure that the marker(s) has applied assessment and marking criteria equitably and appropriately

Document Development

Details of staff who were involved in the development of this policy:

Name	Role
Liam Curran	Manager CfE Higher Education

Details of staff, external groups or external organisations who were consulted in the development of this policy:

Name	Organisation	Date
N/A		

Approval Dates

Approved by	Date
Governing Body	12.01.2022

Document History

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01	01/11/2021	Liam Curran	Yes	V2.0	No	No