

Higher Education Moderation of Assessment Procedure

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') implements moderation processes to ensure transparent quality assurance of assessment and identifies actions to continuously improve the practice of the assessment of student learning and the student experience.

(2) The University ensures consistent and comparable judgements of student learning against academic standards.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This procedure outlines consistent moderation processes to be implemented across the University.

(4) This procedure supports staff to quality assure, monitor and improve the assessment of student learning and processes for marking and moderation.

Section 3 - Scope

(5) This procedure applies to higher education staff, all students enrolled in higher education coursework courses at the University, and to the coursework components of higher degree by research (HDR) courses.

Section 4 - Procedure

(6) Moderation of student evidence of learning (samples of work) will be undertaken within faculties.

(7) Faculties must ensure moderation of student samples of work for at least one assessment task per unit in a teaching year.

- a. Units delivered via the Hyperflexible delivery model must be moderated on a continuing basis.
- b. Marks and grades must only be released to students once any post assessment moderation process is complete, in line with the requirements of the [Higher Education Coursework Assessment Policy and Procedure](#).

Purposes of moderation

(8) Moderation is an integral part of the assessment process. Assessment moderation practices are undertaken to:

- a. ensure valid and reliable judgements are made about student learning;
- b. ensure grading decisions are academically defensible and comparable across student cohorts;
- c. ensure continuous improvements are made to assessment design, rubric design, and the quality of feedback provided to students; and
- d. promote collaboration with colleagues to share evidence-informed practices and teamwork.

Types of moderation

(9) Moderation at CDU must take one of the following two forms or a combination of these:

- a. Consensus moderation.
 - i. Consensus moderation includes all assessors meeting to discuss judgements and reaching consensus.
- b. Expert moderation.
 - i. Expert moderation is where the final marks and feedback are reviewed and determined by an expert in the assessment, such as the Unit Coordinator or Course Coordinator.
 - ii. External review of samples of student work and feedback may also be undertaken as part of the Academic Calibration Program.

(10) When moderating samples of student work, the following must be evaluated:

- a. adherence to the marking guide or rubrics;
- b. consistent application of marking guides and rubrics;
- c. feedback that supports student learning; and
- d. alignment to policy including the [Higher Education Coursework Assessment Policy and Procedure](#).

Phases of moderation

(11) At CDU, an assessment will undergo four (4) phases of moderation:

- a. Planning.
- b. Pre-assessment.
- c. Marking.
- d. Post grade.

Planning for moderation

(12) Faculties must ensure that their moderation practices specify how:

- a. assessment tasks are reviewed in relation to unit objectives, student workload and, where applicable, professional accreditation requirements;
- b. consistent, valid and reliable judgements are made about student performance in relation to learning outcomes within and across courses;
- c. marks and grades are reviewed; and
- d. breaches of academic integrity, where present, have been addressed.

(13) Unit Coordinators, in consultation with the Course Coordinator and/or Discipline Head, Head of Discipline or Dean, where applicable, are responsible for planning for moderation to:

- a. meet the timelines for providing marks and feedback to students as per the [Higher Education Coursework Assessment Policy and Procedure](#);
- b. ensure that 10% of student evidence of learning (student samples) from at least one assessment per unit will be moderated each year;
- c. choose the assessment tasks to be moderated;
- d. choose the type of moderation or a combination of the types of moderation;
- e. share the results of moderation especially where the unit is in more than one course and where amendments to

a rubric or assessment task are identified; and

- f. advise the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee where moderation timelines or quotas may need to be negotiated.

(14) Assessments will be chosen for moderation based on the following criteria:

- a. high-risk assessment tasks where a pattern of breaches or no breaches of academic integrity have been recorded;
- b. assessment tasks required to assure learning, including capstone and hurdle requirements;
- c. assessment tasks involving multiple markers;
- d. assessment tasks designed to evaluate student progress towards a course learning outcome; and/or
- e. assessment tasks identified as needing review through unit review processes, past moderation or academic calibration.

(15) To ensure transparency and manage workload and scheduling needs, Unit Coordinators will provide information about moderation planning to the members of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee.

Pre-assessment moderation

(16) The Unit Coordinator will lead pre-assessment moderation to ensure the assessment is fit for purpose before students complete it, evaluating the quality of:

- a. assessment design;
- b. constructive alignment to unit learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, appropriate standards, and teaching and learning activities;
- c. clear marking criteria and rubric design;
- d. information and instructions provided to students; and
- e. intended process of providing feedback to students.

Marking moderation

(17) The Unit Coordinator will lead moderation to ensure marker consistency (where there is more than one marker) and consistency in marks across teaching periods. This will include:

- a. marker training where there are multiple markers;
- b. reviewing, for each marker:
 - i. 10% of assessments marked;
 - ii. at least 3 marked samples from a range of grades; or
 - iii. at least one marked sample in each grading range;
- c. reviewing outlier marks or clusters of marks; and
- d. reviewing the feedback provided to students on the samples selected (13b).

(18) Marker training may include:

- a. meeting to gain consensus understanding of the marking schema or rubric;
- b. blind marking the same sample of student work and comparing marks; then discussing to reach consensus;
- c. modelled and shared marking of a sample (early submissions or submissions from a previous semester may be used in training); or
- d. second expert marking of three (3) or more marked samples from each marker before continuing to mark.

(19) Moderation to ensure consistency of marking may include both consensus moderation and expert moderation.

(20) Where discrepancies in marking cannot be resolved via consensus moderation, up to 50% of student samples may need to be determined by expert moderation.

(21) Where discrepancies in marking across teaching periods occur, evidence-based reasons must be provided to the Course Coordinator and Higher Education Faculty Assessment Review Panel. For example, the assessment design was amended between teaching periods.

(22) Where a rubric needs to be amended before the next teaching period, the Unit Coordinator is responsible for following faculty processes to implement the update.

Post grade moderation

(23) The Higher Education Faculty Assessment Review Panel, guided by information from the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee and Course Coordinator, will moderate grades before grade release.

(24) The Higher Education Faculty Assessment Review Panel will review consistency of grade allocation and spread:

- a. with previous offerings for the same unit to monitor improvements made to assessment design, marking and student experience; and
- b. with other units in the same course and teaching period that display extreme or outlier grades by comparison.

Roles and responsibilities

(25) The Unit Coordinator will:

- a. oversee all assessment practices, including moderation, within their unit;
- b. be responsible for resolving marking discrepancies;
- c. train markers and manage communication with markers about moderation processes and decisions;
- d. ensure that moderated marks are released to students within the appropriate timelines; and
- e. report outcomes and recommendations arising from moderation to Faculty committees as required.

(26) The Course Coordinator will:

- a. support the Unit Coordinator to manage moderation processes;
- b. collate moderation outcomes and recommendations for their course; and
- c. use this information when completing Annual Course Review.

Continuous Improvement & Compliance

(27) Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees will review outcomes from moderation processes, including Higher Education Faculty Assessment Review Panels, and make recommendations for future moderation. This may be considered in the development of the Faculty Quality Improvement Plan.

(28) Higher Education Faculty Assessment Review Panels and/or Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees will report outcomes of moderation to Teaching and Learning Connect each year to be included in the Assurance of Learning report as per the Academic Board Comprehensive Reporting Framework.

(29) The report may include the following:

- a. moderation processes completed including the number of units and number of student samples moderated;
- b. changes to grades resulting from moderation;

- c. confirmed breaches of academic integrity or other policies;
- d. improvements to be made to moderation and/or marking processes;
- e. enhancements to be made to assessment design including rubric design, information to students, methods for providing feedback to students and academic integrity in accordance with the timelines set out in the [Higher Education Course and Unit Accreditation Procedure](#);
- f. enhancements to assessment practices; and
- g. professional practice improvements and opportunities for professional learning, including support from Teaching and Learning Connect.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(30) Non-compliance with governance documents is considered a breach of the [Code of Conduct - Employees](#) or the [Code of Conduct - Students](#), as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the [Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025](#) and the [Code of Conduct - Students](#).

(31) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the [Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees](#) and [Complaints Policy - Students](#).

(32) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the [Fraud and Corruption Control Policy](#) and [Whistleblower Reporting \(Improper Conduct\) Procedure](#).

Status and Details

Status	Future
Effective Date	1st March 2027
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Responsible Executive	Lisa Papatraianou Deputy Provost
Implementation Officer	Lisa Papatraianou Deputy Provost
Enquiries Contact	Lisa Papatraianou Deputy Provost

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Course Coordinator" - An academic staff member who is responsible for the academic management of a course.

"Faculty" - An organisational and academic unit in the University that delivers courses and conducts research.

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.

"Governance document" - means policy or procedure published in the Governance Document Library. Policies and procedures are collectively called 'governance documents' and are often referred to as 'policy' or 'University policy'.

"Hyperflexible delivery" - A type of delivery where students have maximum flexibility and independence in their approach to study, including when they access materials, engage in learning activities, and submit assessments. In contrast to delivery in semesters or intensive periods.