

Higher Education Moderation

Policy and Procedure

Code and Version Control:	4.0
Policy Owner:	Director of Higher Education
Date Approved by Academic Board:	12 November 2025
Scheduled Review Date:	10 November 2028
Related Policies and Documents:	Office for Learning and Teaching Good Practice Report: Assuring Learning Outcomes and Standards, 2014 TEQSA Guidance Note: Course Design (including Learning Outcomes and Assessment) 2017 TEQSA Guidance note: Academic Monitoring, Review and Improvement

Legislative and Regulatory Compliance

APAC's moderation practices support academic quality and integrity by ensuring assessment standards are valid, reliable, fair and consistent. These processes align with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, specifically Standard 1.4.3 and 5.3 and reflect sector good practice. 1.4.1-1.4.4, 3.1.2, 3.1.4, 5.2.1-5.2.3 and 5.3 and underpins external referencing activities thereby safeguarding student certification and award quality.

Purpose

To define APAC's moderation framework to assure academic standards, maintain course and unit quality, and ensure compliance with mandated higher education requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to all academic staff and members of APAC decision-making bodies involved in the development, delivery, or review of assessment.

Policy

Moderation ensures fairness and credibility in student assessment and is a key component of APAC's quality assurance and improvement. It ensures assessments align with the relevant AQF level, unit and course learning outcomes, employer and industry expectations and requirements, and Australian higher education standards. It involves reviewing and aligning assessment tasks, criteria, learning outcomes, and grades and includes:

Document Code: Higher Education Benchmarking Policy and Procedure

Version: 5.0

Review Date: November 2028

- *Internal moderation*: conducted within APAC to ensure consistency across assessment mechanisms, rubrics, expectations and grades
- *External moderation*: benchmarking APAC standards against broader disciplinary or sector norms
- *Consensus moderation*: collaborative development of assessment instruments, grading rubrics, expectations and grades.

Moderation is grounded in a whole-of-institution approach and guided by principles of transparency, fairness, and collegial engagement. Assessment tasks are continuously reviewed to ensure they are explicit, valid, fair, reliable, aligned with the AQF level. Outcomes are benchmarked against similar courses and samples of internally moderated assessments are periodically externally moderated. Moderation processes are documented and regularly reviewed to correct deficiencies and drive improvements.

Procedure

- the Head of Discipline (HoD) completes the APAC Moderation Checklist for each unit being delivered identifying the key steps, moderators and the timeline for moderation activities. The Moderation Checklist is circulated to the Academic Board for approval.
- in alignment with the Moderation Checklist, the HoD appoints a moderation team for each unit prior to a trimester beginning.
- the assessment schedule, tasks and marking guidelines are moderated and pre-validated in the staff orientation and briefing meeting using the Pre-Assessment Moderation Checklist.
- moderation instruments are identified in the orientation and briefing meeting and staff receive the *Moderation at APAC* pack.
- moderation occurs before grades are communicated to students.
- where a significant discrepancy in marks is identified, the Director of Higher Education (DoHE) will provide a direction on the appropriate mark to be applied or will review at least two other examples of marking by the initial marker, to determine if there is a systematic issue to be addressed and further moderation required.
- the HoD uses the Post-Assessment Moderation Checklist to document moderation including participants, original grades, adjusted grades, reasons for grade changes, and type of moderation.
- results are submitted to the Learning Management System (LMS) by the teaching staff.
- after final moderation, the HoD downloads the Grade Report for each unit from the LMS.
- HoD's create a Grades and Moderation report which includes:
 - pre-moderation and validation activities
 - moderation processes and participants
 - grade changes including the new grade and reasons for change

Document Code: Higher Education Benchmarking Policy and Procedure

Version: 5.0

Review Date: November 2028

- final grades
- significant marking discrepancies ($\geq 10\%$);
- borderline grades and incomplete results;
- reasonable adjustments and extensions
- the Grades Ratification Committee review the Grades and Moderation Report resulting in the ratification of grades
- the Director of Operations and Student Services uploads the grades into Paradigm
- regular external reviews of moderation are conducted, with findings reported to the Grades Ratification Committee and actions taken to improve processes.
- a moderation schedule is published each trimester
- all moderation documentation is securely stored

Responsibilities

- **Board of Directors:**
 - oversee the management and performance of APAC, including academic governance and the implementation and effectiveness of management and performance improvement activities
- **Grades Ratification Committee:**
 - oversee moderation processes and advises on quality improvements
 - review Moderation reports
 - ratify academic results for publication
- **Chief Executive Officer (CEO):**
 - ensures moderation processes are adequately resourced.
- **Director of Higher Education:**
 - ensures moderation is effectively implemented
 - coordinates external reviews and prepares reports
- **Head of Discipline:**
 - leads moderation planning and implementation including staff training in induction and pre-trimester meetings
 - prepares grades and moderation reports
 - enacts and reports on actions identified by the Grades Ratification Committee
 - ensures moderation records are maintained
- **Academic Staff:**
 - engage in moderation activities and professional development
 - contribute to a culture of academic integrity and continuous improvement.

Document Code: Higher Education Benchmarking Policy and Procedure

Version: 5.0

Review Date: November 2028

Definitions

- **Marking Rubric** is a document specifying the criteria on which an assessment item will be marked, describing the standards of achievement for each criterion, and detailing what must be demonstrated to achieve a particular standard relative to a particular criterion.
- **Moderation** is a process, separate from the marking of assessment items, which ensures that an assessment outcome, such as a mark or grade, is fair, valid and reliable, that assessment criteria have been applied consistently, and that any differences in academic judgement between individual markers can be identified, acknowledged and addressed.
- **Reliability** is the degree to which assessment consistently measures what it is intended to measure, in different courses and units, at different times, and with different markers.
- **Validity** is the degree to which an assessment task measures what it is intended to measure.

Version Control and Document Owner

Policy Category	Academic	Approval Date	12 November 2025	
Document Owner	Director of Higher Education	Approval Authority	Academic Board	
Audience	Staff	Review Date	November 2028	
Revision History				
Version	Author	Change Summary	Date Approved	Date Effective
1.0	APAC	New document.	18 February 2018	
1.1	APAC	Incl. Benchmarking Policy and Course Review Policy		
1.2	APAC	Incl. Course Review Policy		
1.3	APAC	Incl. Course Development Policy		
1.4	APAC	Incl. Course Discontinuation Policy		
2.0	APAC	Consolidation of AQ Policies. Grade Updates.		
3.0	DVE Business Solutions Pty Ltd	Review and update of the policy and procedure.	14 October 2022	
4.0	APAC	Update to new P&P Framework	12 November 2025	12 November 2025

Document Code: Higher Education Benchmarking Policy and Procedure

Version: 5.0

Review Date: November 2028

Page 5 of 5

Australian Performing Arts Conservatory ABN 11 009 772 481

Registered as an Australian Institution of Higher Education PRV14046 CRICOS Provider Number 03897G