ASSESSMENT MODERATION
Policy and Procedures

DEFINITIONS

Terms in this document, for which definitions are not provided in the text or may not be self-evident or for which usage at ACC may differ to that in other higher education institutions are as follows:

Consensus Moderation: Is broadly defined as a peer review process used to reach a general agreement about what quality assessment and its outcomes "looks like"; it ensures that the judgments of students' performance are consistent and have the same "meaning" irrespective of time, place, institution or examiner.

Marking Rubric: In the higher education context, a rubric is typically an evaluation tool or set of guidelines used to promote the consistent application of learning expectations, learning objectives or learning standards or to measure their attainment against a consistent set of criteria.

Marking Rubrics clearly define academic expectations for students (in. terms of learning outcomes – i.e. knowledge, skills and understanding) and help to ensure consistency in the evaluation of academic work from student to student, assignment to assignment, or course to course. In this way they ensure adherence to standards in terms of definite levels of achievement and/or performance. They are also used as scoring instruments to determine grades, which reflect the degree to which learning standards have been demonstrated or attained by students.

Reliability of assessment tasks: Assessment tasks are designed to be implemented consistently. This means even if the task itself addresses the learning outcomes (i.e. it is valid), if it is too complex in its nature and/or has its scope beyond what is expected to address the learning outcomes, the task may become unreliable as a means of assessment.

Reliability of marking/grading: Assessment tasks are marked consistently, correctly and fairly across different submissions/examinations being assessed by the single marker, as well as across different markers, cohorts and locations. Many assessment tasks require the markers to apply their expert discretion to generate a mark/grade and an effort needs to be made to make sure this subjective variation is eliminated as much as possible.

Semester: either of the two periods of study into which an academic year is divided, constituting half of the regular academic year.

Subject: A scientific or professional discipline or body of knowledge which forms an essential part of the degree program curriculum. Subjects at the ACC comprise one or more units of study.

Unit Coordinator: The academic staff member who is responsible for the design, delivery and assessment of a scientific or professional discipline or body of knowledge which forms an essential part of the degree program curriculum.

Unit (or Unit of Study): An element of a subject (as defined above), that has specified student learning outcomes and requires satisfactory performance in assessments that measure student performance regarding learning outcomes.

Validity of assessment tasks: Assessment tasks are designed to assess what they are supposed to assess, which are the learning outcomes of the tasks, unit and course. This means even if students find a particular assessment task engaging and performed well, if the task does not address the learning outcomes, it is not valid in the given context.

Validity of marking/grading: Assessment tasks are marked in response to what the assessment tasks are supposed to assess. This means even if the criterion-based marking is conducted by a single trained assessor/marker using a rubric to maintain the consistency of the marking, if the marking was undertaken against the criteria inconsistent with the learning outcomes, the marking is said to be invalid as assessment. This inconsistency includes the disproportionate allocation of marks for only specific aspects of the learning outcomes.

PURPOSE

Effective moderation of assessment is fundamental to the ongoing development, maintenance and continuous improvement of academic quality.

The purpose of the ACC Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedures is to provide assurance that assessment activities have been designed and implemented appropriately so that students and staff can be confident that the assessment tasks, marking and therefore the results obtained are valid and reliable.

SCOPE

Assessment moderation policy and procedures are applicable to academic staff, external reviewers and students of the ACC.

POLICY STATEMENT

To ensure effective assessment, moderation is conducted both internally and through external moderators. This enables valid and consistent assessment of subject learning outcomes and student performance whilst maintaining comparable standards against other tertiary education providers.

Moderation endeavours to ensure that all aspects of ACC award programs meet AQF standards.

Collaborative moderation occurs at two (2) points during the assessment process: pre-assessment and post-assessment. Pre-assessment moderation certifies the relevance of assessment tasks against course learning outcomes and graduate attributes. Post-assessment moderation aims to achieve a comparability of results between students, ensuring marks/grades awarded to students are valid and defensible.

Collaboration between academic staff and external reviewers aims to maintain a high level of academic rigor whilst ensuring a comparable standard in relation to other relevant tertiary institutions.

PROCEDURES

1. **Moderation of Assessment Tasks**

Pre-assessment Moderation

1.1. Prior to the commencement of teaching each Semester, Unit Coordinators will determine and review assessment items for the unit(s) for which they are responsible and present these items, including marking rubrics and/or schedules, to the Academic Dean for approval.

1.2.   The Academic Dean will be responsible for review and approval all assessment tasks in relation to their alignment with program and subject learning outcomes and Graduate Attributes and will provide a report on unit assessment profiles together with recommendations to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

1.3.   A clear and concise description of criteria relevant to each assessment task will be provided within each subject profile.

Post-assessment Moderation

1.4   To further ensure the suitability and quality of the assessment tasks and process of assessment and marking/grading, the Academic Dean will present a further report with recommendations to the Learning and Teaching Committee on the post-assessment moderation process and its outcomes (as indicated in section 2. below)

1.5   The Learning and Teaching Committee will in turn report its assessment of the quality of the moderation and provide recommendations as to where continuous improvement is required.

2.   Moderation of Results/Grades - Course Work Assessment (other than exams):

2.1   Where multiple assessors are used for submitted course work, a selection of at least five (5) examples of students' work (encompassing work graded as fail, pass, credit, distinction and high distinction) will be provided by each assessor for internal moderation by the relevant Subject Coordinator.

2.2   The Unit Coordinator will undertake moderation of the initial grades and provide feedback to individual assessors, advising them directly of any marking adjustments required.

2.3   Where the Unit Coordinator is also the assessor of the course work, the Program Coordinator will nominate an alternate moderator.

2.4   Assessors will acknowledge receipt of feedback and action all requirements as appropriate.

3.   Moderation of Results/Grades - Examinations:

3.1   Where multiple assessors are used for examination, a selection of at least five (5) examples of students' examination papers, (encompassing work graded as fail, pass, credit, distinction and high distinction) will be provided by each assessor for internal moderation by the relevant Unit Coordinator.

3.2   The Unit Coordinators will undertake moderation of the initial grades and provide feedback to individual assessors, advising them directly of any marking adjustments required.

3.3   Where the Unit Coordinator is also the assessor of the course work, the Program Coordinator will nominate an alternate moderator.

3.4   Assessors will acknowledge receipt of feedback and action all requirements as appropriate.

3.5   In examinations where multiple assessors are required to assess the overall performance of student ability and provide judgment on overall achievement, Consensus Moderation will take place. This will involve one or more moderation meetings or discussions between assessors, sharing judgments on examples of student performance in order to reach agreement about the marks/grades awarded to the student. The process will also serve to facilitate grade resolution where there maybe disagreement between assessors as to the appropriate mark/grade awarded across the cohort or to an individual.

3.6   The Unit Coordinator will receive a list of all assessment marks from each assessor on completion of marking so that a full post-assessment review of all assessment tasks, grades and overall calculation of grades can be

ratified, prior to the publication of grades., which will be in accordance with a schedule communicated to students at the commencement of each Semester.

4. Responsibilities of Assessors and Unit Coordinators and the Academic Dean

4.1 It is the responsibility of each Assessor to ensure that they:

- Meet timeframes for marking and submission of grades.
- Are appropriately acquainted with assessment tasks and marking criteria prior to assessment.
- Conduct course work and/or examination assessment in a fair and unbiased manner.
- Provide the Unit Coordinator with relevant samples of marked assessments for internal moderation.
- Acknowledge feedback and take appropriate action regarding any requests for adjustment of their marking of assessment items.
- Provide the Unit Coordinator with a full list of final marks for each student for each assessment item.
- Ensure all marks/grades are withheld from students until moderation has been completed at the end of each Semester and the marks/grades have been ratified by the Learning and Teaching Committee.
- Ensure all students receive timely and constructive feedback regarding their performance on all assessment items.

4.2 It is the responsibility of the Unit Coordinator to ensure:

- The production and timely submission of assessment task descriptions and marking rubric/schedules to the Academic Dean, for publication and release to both students and academic assessors.
- Continual and effective communication with all Assessors throughout the Semester and during the moderation process to ensure the consistency and continuity of grades across each assessment item.
- Only one ratified grade is released to students following the completion of the moderation process.

4.3 It is the responsibility of the Academic Dean to ensure:

- Adherence to the Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedures by relevant Unit Coordinators, Assessors, any other relevant ACC Academic staff, External Reviewers as appropriate, and students;
- Presentation of comprehensive Assessment Moderation Reports at the conclusion of each Semester, on all units offered during the preceding Semester, to the Learning and Teaching Committee for consideration and recommendation to the Academic Board and, if relevant, its Course Development Committee.

5. External Moderation

5.1. External moderators will be appointed by the Academic Board in accordance with procedures established by the Board in relation to course development and review.

5.2. External moderators will provide a written report to the Academic Board in a format recommended by the Board on:

- The quality and effectiveness of assessment tasks.
- The quality of cohort performance in terms of knowledge and skills development as detailed in unit and program learning outcomes.
- The extent to which benchmarking standards are being meet.
- Recommendations for change/continuous improvement.

6. Closing the Quality Assurance Loop for Assessment

The Academic Board together with the Academic Dean are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the Quality Assurance loop is closed regarding all matters pertaining to:

- The alignment of assessment tasks with ACC program and unit learning objectives and outcomes, and the specific criteria, standards and marking/grading processes which have been applied.
- Benchmarking to ensure the relevance and quality of ACC Assessment Moderation in relation to assessment moderation in comparable Higher Education Institutions, with comparable programs.

They will take all necessary steps to ensure effective communications that facilitate continuous improvement, in line with recommendations which emanate from the Assessment Moderation Implementation, Monitoring and Review.

IMPLEMENTATION and MONITORING

The College President and Academic Dean are ultimately responsible for effective implementation and monitoring of the Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedures.

The ACC Learning and Teaching Committee, Academic Board and Course Development Committee are each responsible for various elements of quality assurance of Assessment at the ACC. Their respective roles are clearly indicated in the ACC Governance Framework and will be monitored by the Board of Directors for their discharge of governance and management accountabilities.

VERSION CONTROL

Document: T002 Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedures		
Responsible Officer: Academic Dean		
Initially Approved by: Academic Board		Date: 15 January 2018
Reviewed and approved by: Academic Board		Date: 10 March 2021
Version: V3.0	Replaces Version(s): V2.0	Next Review: March 2024
Nature of Change	February 2021 • Title changed from *Academic Moderation Policy and Procedures* to *Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedures* • Minor spelling, other text and formatting edits • Addition of definitions • Addition of elements that clarify the ACC's commitment to quality assurance of Assessment at all levels.	