FACT SHEET 4

INTERNAL MODERATION

Introduction

The FHEC defines moderation as:

> Moderation is a quality review process. It involves checking that the assessment tool produced valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable accurate judgements to be made as to whether the requirements of the relevant aspects of the unit standards have been met. It includes reviewing and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and or outcomes.
>
> Source: Policy 3-3 External moderation of FQF National Qualifications 1 – 6

This policy also indicates that HEIs are responsible for the quality of the assessment process and assessment judgements made by their assessors through strategies such as internal moderation processes.

Purpose of internal moderation

The primary purpose of internal moderation is about HEIs taking responsibility for the quality of the assessment and assessment judgements. As is the case with external moderation, the focus of the consensus moderation is reviewing the assessment tool and assessor judgements (in doing, so the consensus panel reviews samples of learner work).

Assessment and assessment tools

Principles of good assessment

Competency-based assessment, including recognition of prior learning assessment, should meet the principles of assessment. The principles of assessment include:

- Validity: Validity is concerned with the extent to which an assessment decision, which is based on evidence of performance, is justified.
- Reliability: Reliability is concerned with how accurate or precise the tasks are; how much error is included in the evidence; that the evidence is consistently interpreted; and, that assessment outcomes are comparable across assessors.
- Fairness: Fairness is concerned with considering the individual learner's needs and characteristics plus any reasonable adjustments to assessment that need to be applied. In addition, learners must know and understand the assessment process and the criteria to be applied.
- Flexibility: Flexibility is concerned with reflecting the needs and characteristics of the individual learner, providing recognition of prior learning, and drawing on a range of methods appropriate to the context.

Quality evidence

Principles of quality evidence provide guidance on the collection and evaluation of evidence. Evidence should be:

- Valid: the evidence relates to the standard being assessed.
- Authentic: the evidence is the learner's own work.
- Sufficient: the quality and quantity of evidence enable a judgement to be made.
- Current: the evidence is from the present or the recent past.

Assessment tools

Assessment tools include:

- The context and conditions for the assessment.
- The tasks to be undertaken by the learner.
- An outline of the evidence to be gathered from the learner and the evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance (including the assessment decision-making rules).
- The recording and reporting requirements.[1]

Assessment tools provide the assessors with clear guidance on how to conduct the assessments; how the evidence will be collected; and, how a decision of successful completion is made. Assessment tools may relate to one, or more, unit standards. Assessment tools may be a variety of documents that include:

- Instructions to assessors.
- Instructions to learners.
- Marking guides or rubrics, to inform assessor judgements.
- Mapping forms.
- Recording and reporting forms.

Moderation activities are focussed on the assessment tools used and the assessor judgements made.

Approach to internal moderation

Moderation is a quality review process which takes place after an assessment has occurred. The approach an HEI could take to internal moderation would more than likely be similar to that used for external moderation.

Moderation using a consensus panel model is based on some key understandings:

- That the process is focussed on continuous improvement
- No learner is disadvantaged by the process, i.e. their reported result is not changed
- It is important for the success and effectiveness of external moderation:
  - Moderators/assessors maintain confidentiality.

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[1] Gillis and Bateman 2009c, p. 57.

- The principle of continuous improvement is applied, that the process is collaborative and that constructive feedback is provided in discussions and reporting processes.
- A sampling strategy is applied, as not all unit standards and assessor, judgements can be reviewed.

Planning internal moderation

Scheduling
The HEI is responsible for the scheduling, frequency and timing of the internal moderation consensus meetings. Meetings should occur at least twice per year, following the occurrence of assessment.

Sampling
It is not necessary nor possible to externally moderate all unit standards and all assessor judgements. However, a sample should be able to identify any issues with assessment practices and judgements.
Sampling of unit standards may be based on the level of risk, focussing on (but not limited to):
- Learner enrolment size
- Capacity and number of assessors
- Safety (i.e. potential danger to the learner and broader community)
- Multiple sites (within an HEI)
- Changes in context (e.g. technological changes, revised unit standard, revised or new legislation)
- Mode of delivery (e.g. distance, online)
- Recognition of prior learning
- Co-provider arrangements (e.g. twinning arrangements)
- Financial (e.g. expensive equipment required).

Sampling learner work is recommended. Sampling of learner work will consider:
- Adequate representation of the full range of performance
- Adequate representation of borderline cases at the satisfactory/not yet satisfactory threshold
- An element of random selection.[2]

Recording and reporting

HEIs should retain all records of internal moderation activities. Moderation records will be used to inform future practice. Records include:
- Records of the sampling strategy.
- Records of the coding used to maintain the confidentiality of samples.
- Instructions to assessors.

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[2] Gillis and Bateman 2009c, p. 34.

- Sampled items.
- Reporting form for each moderated sample.
- Meeting summary record form.
- Action plan.
- Attendance form.[3]

Records should not be retained beyond five years. Secure discard processes should be deployed.

HEIs should consider how the findings of consensus moderation meetings shall be reported internally to assist in continuous improvement of assessment.

Operationalising internal moderation

To operationalise internal moderation, HEIs should have in place:
- A procedure for how internal moderation will occur, including how often, level of participation, financial considerations, sampling strategy, recording and reporting process, continuous improvement.
- A person responsible for the coordination of internal moderation
- Plan for moderation that identifies the unit standards of the qualifications being delivered, when unit standards will be moderated, based on a risk strategy
- Templates for recording and reporting moderation activity (refer to Appendix 1 for a sample recording sheet).
- Template of an action plan and for monitoring implementation of actions (refer to Appendix 2 for a sample action plan).

Associated documents
- Fact Sheet 1: Assessment system
- Fact Sheet 2: Assessment tools
- Fact Sheet 3: Recognition of Prior Learning
- Fact Sheet 5: Assessment simulation
- Fact Sheet 6: Meeting assessors' requirements
- Fact Sheet 7: Using third parties to collect assessment evidence
- Fact Sheet 8: Structured workplace learning and workplace assessment
- Assessment tool templates.

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[3] Gillis and Bateman 2009c, p. 37–38.

References

Bateman, A. & Clayton, B et al. 2001. *Quality assurance guide for assessment.* Canberra, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
Gillis, S. and Bateman, A. 2009c. *Implementation guide: validation and moderation 2009.* Canberra. National Quality Council.

Below is a **sample** internal moderation record for review of individual unit standards.

UNIT STANDARD REVIEW

Qualification:		
Unit Standard:		
Date:		
Size of learner sample:		
VALIDITY	**Yes/No**	**Comment**
1. The target group has been identified and is consistent with the purpose and limitations of the tool.		
2. The context of the assessment meets the requirements of the unit standard.		
3. The assessment tasks are based on or reflect realistic workplace activities and contexts.		
4. The tool, as a whole, represents the full range of skills and knowledge specified with the unit standard(s), or learning outcomes, being assessed.		
5. The assessment tasks have been designed to allow holistic and integrated assessment of knowledge, skills and application.		
6. The assessment tasks have been designed to assess a variety of evidence from a variety of performances over time and contexts (where practical).		
7. The methods selected are appropriate for the assessment (as specified by the industry where applicable).		
8. The tool has been designed to minimise other unrelated factors (i.e. factors not related to the unit standard).		
9. Mapping (if provided) accurately aligns all aspects of the unit standard to the assessment tool.		
RELIABILITY	**Yes/No**	**Comment**
1. Assessment responses, exemplars and checklists have been prepared for each method to guide assessors and may include marking guides.		

	Yes/No	Comment
2. Clear guidelines to direct assessors in how to synthesise multiple sources of evidence to make an overall judgement, i.e. decision-making rule.		
3. Clear instructions to learners as to the assessment tasks and the evidence requirements.		
4. Clear instructions for undertaking assessment are available to all assessors, including: • How to set up the tasks • Logistics of conducting assessments (especially in the case of multiple learners) • When to intervene • Resources and equipment required • Time allocation		

AUTHENTICITY	**Yes/No**	**Comment**
1. The tasks are undertaken in conditions that ensure the authenticity of the evidence.		
2. Where work samples are to be used as evidence, learners will receive specific guidelines on requirements, including information about ensuring authenticity and currency of the evidence.		

FLEXIBILITY	**Yes/No**	**Comment**
1. The assessment approach can be adapted to meet the needs of all learners and workplaces.		
2. Reasonable adjustments to the assessment are clear.		
3. The assessment adequately covers both the on- and off-the-job contexts (if required).		

FAIRNESS	**Yes/No**	**Comment**
1. Learners are given clear information on assessment, including: • Assessment tasks and expectations of performance • When and how they will receive feedback • Reasonable adjustments • Plagiarism and cheating • Appeals process.		
2. The assessment chosen caters for the language, literacy and numeracy needs of all learners.		

3.	The special geographic, financial, cultural or social needs of learners have been considered in the development and conduct of the assessment.		

Source: Bateman and Clayton et al. 2001, Gillis and Bateman 2009.

LEARNER SAMPLE

Consider the following:

- Is learner's assessment marked according to the marking guide/rubric and decision-making rule? Was the judgement too harsh, too lenient, unjustified, appropriate?
- Has the assessor interpreted the questions/expected responses consistently?
- Is there evidence of plagiarism/cheating not addressed?
- Are there specific aspects of the assessment where learner consistently underperformed?
- Has the assessor accurately recorded the outcome?

LEARNER IDENTIFIER	COMMENTS:
Improvements needed (e.g. changes to assessment tool, change of practice of assessors, additional training for assessors, or changes to training program)?	

Below is a **sample** internal moderation summary and action plan.

MODERATION SUMMARY AND ACTION PLAN

Qualifications:	
Unit Standard(s):	
Date:	

Unit Standard	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe

Chair: …………………………………………………….
Signature: ……………………………………………….
Date: …………………………………………………….