HE Policy on Internal Moderation of Assessment

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Revision History

Version	Purpose/Change	Date

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Contents   Page

This policy is written in line with the Expectations and Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), which are a key reference point for higher education providers in all parts of the UK.

Assessment is a fundamental aspect of the student learning experience. Engagement in assessment activities and interaction with staff and peers enables learning, both as part of the task and through review of their performance. It is a vehicle for obtaining feedback. Ultimately, it determines whether each student has achieved their course's learning outcomes and allows the awarding body to ensure that appropriate standards are being applied rigorously. Deliberate, systematic quality assurance ensures that assessment processes, standards and any other criteria are applied consistently and equitably, with reliability, validity and fairness.

Context

1.1 Moderation is the process used to ensure that assessment outcomes are accurate and fair, that assessment criteria have been applied consistently, and that there is a shared understanding of the academic standards that students are expected to meet. It ensures that the quality and integrity of assessment is clear and robust for staff and students.

1.2 In the context of this policy, internal moderation[1] is the overarching term intended to refer to a range of quality assurance activities which provide confirmation that, at all stages, summative assessment (i.e. assessment on which the award of credit is based) has been conducted with accuracy, consistency and fairness. Internal moderation covers the terms second marking and double unseen marking.

1.3 External moderation also plays a key role in the quality assurance process. However, ensuring that assessment is effectively conducted should ultimately be a collective Sysco Business Skills Academy responsibility to be exercised through the operation of rigorous internal moderation procedures.

1.4 Internal moderation is not required for assessment that is purely formative (i.e. the result does not contribute to the overall result for the course), although it is good practice to operate processes to ensure consistency of marking and feedback of formative assessment.

1.5 The Programme Leader will be responsible for internal moderation arrangements.

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[1] For Pearson Higher National programmes, the term used is Internal Verification.

1. **Moderation of Assessment Tasks**

2.1 Internal Moderation confirms the appropriateness of the design of specific tasks (e.g. assignment/project brief) and should be completed before the task is issued to students. The aim of this moderation is to ensure that:

- Each task is a valid means of providing students with an opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes for the module.

- The questions or instructions are clearly worded and contain no ambiguities as to what students are expected to do.

- The assessment workload is appropriate to the credit value of the module being assessed, particularly if there are to be multiple components to the assessment.

- The timescale allowed for completion of the task is reasonable.

- All students can reasonably be expected to have access to the resources required for completion of the task.

- There is a clear marking scheme confirming correct answers or key features of model answers and, if applicable, directions where and how marks are to be apportioned according to performance in specific questions or against specific assessment criteria.

2.2 If an assessment task from the previous academic year is to be used again, the moderator should check that dates and deadlines are updated and that the assessment is appropriate for the new group of learners. Assessments must be reviewed annually to ensure they are still fit for purpose and to make improvements based on the experience of delivering and assessing them.

2.3 There may be occasions where assignments may be used which have come either from published material or from other centres. These assignments still need to be internally moderated to ensure that they match the specification that learners are registered on, that the assignments are appropriate for the learners and that there are appropriate resources to deliver them.

2.4 Internal Moderators must use the comments sections on the feedback form to provide advice and guidance to the Assessor if appropriate. Any actions identified must be detailed by the Moderator in the actions required section. If an action is identified, the Assessor must complete this and return it to the Moderator for sign off **prior to an Assignment being issued to learners**.

2. **Standardisation**

3.1 When a unit/module or assignment is delivered and assessed by more than one person, standardisation should usually be implemented **before any formal assessment and internal moderation has taken place**. The standardisation process is to agree the standard of learner work by discussing and mutually assessing a sample of learner work to reach a consensus. This

should be done with reference to the assessment criteria and assessment guidance provided by the awarding body.

3.2 Once agreement has been reached, the Assessors can then individually assess the work of their appointed learners, after which internal moderation will take place.

3. Second Marking

4.1 The purpose of second marking is to ensure that the first marking is fair and consistent with the marking scheme and to ensure comparability of assessment across a cohort. Each marker keeps a record of all marks awarded, together with the rational for awarding each mark. Second marking can be done with or without access to the first marks and comments, which is agreed within the team and is explained as follows:

4.2 Second marking: where a piece of work is marked by another marker; the first mark is known by the second marker. The two markers agree a final mark for the assessment.

4.3 Double unseen marking: where a piece of work is marked by two markers independently; the first mark is not known by the second marker. The two markers agree a final mark for the assessment. This approach has the advantage of the second marker not being influenced by the first mark and arguably provides more accurate verification.

4.4 Second marking or double unseen marking applies for all major projects and dissertations in order to confirm the first mark; the first mark may or may not be known to the second marker.

4.5 Marks must always be agreed and through consultation between the first and second markers. An agreed mark must not be merely based upon splitting the difference between the two original marks.

4.6 It is recommended that an agreed high proportion (50%+) of assessed work graded by a new member of staff at all levels should be second marked.

4. Internal Moderation of Summative Assessment – Selection

5.1 During the course of the programme, sampling from Assessors must cover the following as a minimum:

- every Assessor
- every unit/module
- work from every assignment

5.2 A well-constructed sample should consider:

- the full range of assessment decisions made, including: a range of work meeting pass, merit, distinction criteria and not yet achieved. Work at the borderlines, that is between grades/on boundaries, should also be included in the sample.

- the experience of the Assessor: new or inexperienced Assessors should have more work internally moderated than an experienced Assessor
- new programmes: when a unit/module or programme is first introduced, the sample should be increased
- the size of the group of learners (at least 10% and a minimum of 5 examples, whichever is larger should be chosen).
- known issues with internal moderation: these may have been identified previously

5.3 All programmes should have an internal moderation plan to identify an appropriate sample size. This will be based on risk factors such as:

- moderation feedback about the unit/module or Assessor in previous years
- Assessor experience
- whether the unit/module has been delivered before
- any significant changes to the delivery of the unit/module

5.4 Internal moderators may need to amend their plans for the sample once delivery and assessments have commenced. For example, if the group has been awarded high grades the internal moderator may choose to increase the number of learners sampled at this grade. An example of this approach would be internally moderating a further 10% or 5 scripts (whichever is greater) until either the moderator is satisfied with the accuracy of marking or the entire cohort has been internally moderated.

6. Internal Moderation of Summative Assessment – Process

6.1 The Internal Moderator reviews the Assessor's judgements against the learning aim, unit/module content, assessment criteria and assessment guidance as published in the qualification specification. This will include checking:

- the learner work against the assessment criteria and judge whether it has been assessed accurately
- that marks across the cohort are fair, valid and reliable
- that any differences in academic judgement between Assessors are acknowledged and addressed
- coverage of the unit/module content in conjunction with the assessment guidance to see if the Assessor has taken this into account.
- the feedback from Assessor to learner is accurate and linked to the assessment criteria

6.2 Following internal moderation, if there are any assessment concerns, feedback must be provided to the Assessor with any actions applied to the whole cohort and not just the sampled learners. This may mean that the Assessor must re-assess the learner work in the light of the Internal Moderator's comments. After any changes are applied, the work should be checked again by the Internal Moderator, signed and dated.

6.3 Only the marks agreed following the internal moderation process should be put on material which will be returned to the candidate. It should also be made clear that all marks are subject to confirmation by the relevant Assessment Board and may be subject to amendment.

6.4 Particular arrangements for moderation of practical assessment, such as presentations, music or drama performance, etc. should also be confirmed and documented. The live assessment will either be double unseen marked by more than one assessor at the time of the assessment or an audio/visual recording of the assessment should be undertaken for internal moderation.

7. Timing

7.1 For internal moderation of assessment decisions to take place, learner work must have been formally assessed. Internal moderation must take place **before learners receive confirmation of their achievement and feedback** - within the 10 working days turnaround for marking of work. If any inaccuracies are identified by the Internal Moderator, these can be corrected by the Assessor before results are made available to learners.

8. Resubmissions of work

8.1 If a request for a resubmission is made and providing there have been no issues with the Assessor's decisions at the first submission stage, then the resubmission does not need to be internally moderated if the learner's grade has not improved. The moderator should however check the decisions if the learner's grade has shown improvement to safeguard against any potential malpractice issues. Completing best practice internal moderation at the first submission stage should avoid issues around resubmission.

9. Quality Assurance of Moderation

9.1 Where the two markers or an assessor and internal modifier are unable to reach agreement, every effort should be made to resolve the matter internally by involving a third person to arbitrate or to act as a third marker. The External Examiner must be given access to written comments from internal markers on the piece(s) of work involved.

9.2 Moderation should involve an appropriate mix of moderating partnerships. For example, the same two people do not always moderate each other's work and the marking/grading of less experienced staff is moderated by experienced staff.

9.3 Moderation should be compared across modules as well as within modules in order to highlight possible inconsistencies.

9.4 Evidence must be provided and retained securely to demonstrate that internal moderation has taken place using the appropriate forms in **Appendices 1, 2 and 3**. Internal Moderators should always bear in mind that under the 2018 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) students are able to request access to comments made by internal or external examiners in relation to the assessment of their academic performance (NB: access is to the comments and not the assessed work itself). Any comments recorded should always be professional and constructive.

9.5 Where staff suspect plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data in a student's work, immediate steps will be taken following Sysco Business Skills Academy's HE Academic Misconduct Procedure.

9.6 The HE Manager/Programme Lead are responsible for ensuring that all staff involved in marking and moderation are adequately prepared for this activity, particularly those with less experience or who are new to the HE course.

10. Related Policies

Related policies can be located via the Sysco Business Skills Academy website:
https://www.sysco.uk.com/higher-education/policies-and-procedures/

   a. HE Policy on Assessment
   b. HE Policy on Late Submission of Assessment
   c. HE Policy on Assessment Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances
   d. HE Academic Appeals Policy

Appendix 1.

Internal Moderation of Assignment Briefs (Pearson)

INTERNAL MODERATION – ASSIGNMENT BRIEF		
Programme Title:		
Assessor Name:		
Internal Moderator Name:		
Unit Title:		
Assignment title:		
Learning outcomes targeted by this assignment brief:		
Is this an Authorised Assignment Brief published by Pearson? If so, has it been amended by the Assessor in any way? Please give details. *(If using the Authorised Assignment Brief 'off the shelf' with no amendments, please answer the question marked * in the checklist only)* ***Please note AABs are not applicable to all HN specifications.**		
Has an **Example Assessment Brief** published by Pearson been used? The EAB **must** be appropriately amended and customised. Please give details of the amendments made.		
	Yes	**No**

Has this assignment been submitted to the Assignment Checking Service? *(If Yes, please keep a copy of the ACS feedback with this form)*		

INTERNAL VERIFIER CHECKLIST	Y/N
Are the programme and unit details accurate?	
*Are clear deadlines for assessment given?	
*Is the submission date achievable in relation to the issue date of the assignment?	
Is the vocational scenario or context appropriate, relevant, and current?	
Are the learning outcomes to be addressed stated accurately?	
Is the assessment method appropriate for achieving learning outcomes and the higher grades?	
Is the language and presentation of the assignment appropriate?	
Is the assignment guidance provided holistic? (e.g. not broken down to task per targeted criteria)	
Is it clear what evidence the student needs to generate?	
Is it likely to generate evidence that is valid and sufficient?	

Overall, is the Assignment fit for purpose?	Yes		No**	

**If 'No' is recorded the Internal Moderator must recommend actions detailing the issues to be addressed. The Assessor and the Internal Moderator must then confirm that the action has been undertaken and that the Assignment Brief is authorised for use before being issued to learners.

Action required: *(If none then please state n/a)*	Target Date for Completion	Date Action Completed

General Comments (if appropriate)		
Assignment Brief Authorised for Use:		
Internal Moderator signature		**Date**	
Assessor signature		**Date**	

Appendix 2.

Internal moderation of assessment decisions (Single Student)

INTERNAL MODERATION – ASSESSMENT DECISIONS (Single Student)					
Programme Title:					
Module Number and Title:					
Assessor Name:			**Internal Moderator Name:**		
Assignment title:					
Name of student	**Submission Type** (e.g. First, Resubmission, Retake)	**Grade the Assessor has awarded.**	**Assessment Decision Accurate (Y/N)** (e.g. Resubmission and retake must be capped at a Pass)	**List the learning outcomes and grading criteria where inaccurate decisions have been made**	**State why the assessment decision is inaccurate.** *If an inaccurate decision is recorded the Internal Moderator must recommend actions detailing the issues to be addressed. The Assessor and the Internal Moderator must then confirm that the action has been undertaken before assessment decisions are issued to the student.*
INTERNAL MODERATOR CHECKLIST					**Y/N**

Has the student and the Assessor confirmed the authenticity of the evidence?	
Is there evidence of collusion or plagiarism?	
Is the assessor feedback to the student appropriate and constructive to each student? • Points out strengths and areas for improvement. • Linked to relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria. • Clear as to why the student did not achieve higher grades. • Identify opportunities for improved performance in future assignments.	

GENERAL COMMENTS

Any actions required must be reviewed across the whole cohort.		
Action Required	**Target Date for Completion**	**Date Action Completed**

I confirm that the assessment decisions are accurate, there is no evidence of assessment malpractice and any action points have been addressed and completed in respect of the whole cohort.		
Internal Moderator signature	Date	
Assessor signature	Date	

Appendix 3.

Internal moderation of assessment decisions (Multiple Students)

INTERNAL MODERATION – ASSESSMENT DECISIONS (Multiple students)					
Programme Title:					
Unit Number and Title:					
Assessor Name:			**Internal Moderator Name:**		
Assignment title:					
Name of Student (If a larger sample is required please add rows or use additional sheets)	**Submission Type** (e.g. First, Resubmission, Retake)	**Grade the Assessor has awarded.**	**Assessment Decision Accurate (Y/N)** (e.g. Resubmission and Retake must be capped at a Pass)	**List the learning outcomes and assessment criteria where inaccurate decisions have been made**	**State why the assessment decision is inaccurate.** *If an inaccurate decision is recorded the Internal Moderator must recommend actions detailing the issues to be addressed. The Assessor and the Internal Moderator must then confirm that the action has been undertaken before assessment decisions are issued to learners.*

INTERNAL MODERATOR CHECKLIST	Y/N
Has every student and the Assessor confirmed the authenticity of the evidence?	
Is there evidence of collusion or plagiarism?	
Is the assessor feedback to the student appropriate and constructive to each student? ● Points out strengths and areas for improvement. ● Linked to relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria. ● Clear as to why the student did not achieve higher grades. ● Identify opportunities for improved performance in future assignments.	

GENERAL COMMENTS

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Any actions required must be reviewed across the whole cohort.		
Action Required	**Target Date for Completion**	**Date Action Completed**
I confirm that the assessment decisions are accurate, there is no evidence of assessment malpractice and any action points have been addressed and completed in respect of the whole cohort.		
Internal Moderator signature	**Date**	
Assessor signature	**Date**	