Moderation

First Produced:	8/87	Authorisation:	Academic Board
Current Version:	5/6/14		
Past Revisions:	4/91, 3/92, 7/10/93, 21/6/94, 22/9/94, 10/3/95, 15/2/96, 15/10/99, 24/6/99, 27/4/00, 18/5/00, 20/06/02, 23/03/06, 24/6/10	Officer Responsible:	Director, Academic
Review Cycle:	3 year cycle		
Applies From:	Immediately		

Major changes/additions since the last version was approved are indicated by a vertical line in the left hand margin.

1   Introduction

1.1 Purpose

To provide a broad framework and set of principles to direct moderation practices to ensure that assessment activities are fair, reliable, valid and consistently applied.

1.2 Scope and Application

This policy applies to assessments administered by Ara Institute of Canterbury[1] and/or those delivered in conjunction with Ara, unless otherwise stated. Requirements for moderation of assessment standards and qualifications are included in the Consent and Moderation Requirements (CMR).

Note: Not every procedure included in this policy is relevant to every assessment situation. Minor adjustments where needed may be approved by the Head of Department, Board of Studies or delegated committee. Major departures must be approved by the Academic Board on recommendation from Academic Division. Questions regarding interpretation of and variation to the procedures set out in this policy, are directed in the first instance to the Director, Academic.

1.3 Formal Delegations

a   The Ara Council delegates the Academic Board to:

   i   Approve new and existing programmes and courses which are in accordance with the Ara Strategic Plan and Investment Plan.

   ii   Admit students to approved programmes and courses.

   iii   Grant awards.

   iv   Develop, monitor, review and maintain polices on academic matters, including research.

b   Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring:

   i   Moderation is an integral part of the Department's assessment procedures and that moderation reports (internal and external) are considered and acted upon. They have the authority to delegate specific responsibilities and tasks to others

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[1] From herein referred to as Ara

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(e.g. Programme Managers/Leaders/Coordinators, Department committees), but they maintain overall accountability to the Chief Executive, Academic Board, and/or other person/body identified in policy.

ii   Board of Studies and staff are given the information, direction, and support needed to carry out their responsibilities.

iii   That all internal and external moderation requirements are met (e.g. Moderation Action Plans for assessment standards/ national qualifications and pre/post assessment moderation set out in programme documents).

iv   That moderation results are reported (e.g. Self-Assessment via the Programme Evaluation Report, Board of Studies, Academic Board), depending on the scope and outcome.

v   That appropriate moderation records are kept.

vi   That the results are used as the basis for improvement. Head of Departments have the authority to assign specific responsibilities to others (e.g. Programme Managers/Leaders/Coordinators), but maintain overall accountability.

Related Ara Procedures and Forms	Related Ara Policies
• APP508a Pre Assessment Moderation Record • APP508b Post Assessment Moderation Record	• APP301 Student Rights and Responsibilities • APP505 Assessment • APP603 Design, Development, review and Approval
Related Legislation or Other Documentation	**Good Practice Guidelines** • Best Practice Principles for Moderation of Standards Based Assessment (NZQA, 2005) www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/.../bp-principlesofmoderation.doc
References	
Notes 2014: Formal Delegation from Council to Academic Board updated. Minor edits have been made throughout the policy to update, simplify and align procedures. Consistency arrangements added. 2016: New branding	

2   Principles

2.1   The purpose of moderation is to ensure high quality assessment practices.

2.2   Moderation ensures validity, sufficiency, transparency, authenticity and reliability of assessment.

2.3   Moderation ensures that assessment decisions are fair and reflect the marking guides and learning outcomes.

2.4   Moderation is a negotiated process of agreement between assessor and moderator.

2.5   Moderation outcomes are reported in a constructive and informative way.

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3 Associated procedures for Ara Academic Policy on: Moderation

3.1 Responsibilities for Moderation

a   Programme Managers/Leaders/Coordinators are responsible for carrying out tasks related to moderation (or coordinating other staff to do so) in a way that is consistent with the Academic Board and/or Board of Studies requirements.

b   Academic staff are responsible for taking the steps necessary to understand the principles and practices of moderation contained in this policy and for gaining the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out moderation in a professional manner.

c   When a course/s is assessed by a Department other than the one responsible for the overall programme the Department designing the learning is responsible for moderation and reporting back to the Department responsible for the programme.

d   Self-Assessment will include a focus on the impact of moderation activities.

3.2 Ara Moderation requirements

a   Details related to how moderation is carried out are included in the programme document submitted to the Academic Board for approval. In most cases, both pre and post assessment are needed with an appropriate mix of internal and external input. The mix depends on the type of qualification, level, length, industry/profession contact, importance of comparability, and practical considerations such as access to suitable moderators.

b   The following provides an outline of expected moderation activities.

   i   **Internal pre-moderation**:

- Self-moderation of assessments the first time they are used and when significant changes are made.

- Pre-moderation (by a colleague) the first time the assessment is used, when significantly changed, when carried out by a new staff member and/or prior to external moderation.

- Departments are responsible for providing staff with checklists/guidelines in order to ensure moderation is effective.

   ii   **Internal post-moderation**:

- Co-marking (e.g. for a major project), or checking a selection of assessments (e.g. for a final exam), or using moderated assessment guides/model answers (e.g. for a major assignment) when an assessment counts for more than 75% of the final course result.

  Co-marking oral presentations to ensure moderation occurs.

- When a mark on a full grade boundary, particularly for borderline pass/fail results, influence a programme outcome or progression, a review of the marking decision must take place to ensure fairness.

- All significant assessments are moderated within the review cycle of the programme, as well as for new staff members.

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iii **External moderation** (pre or post):

Moderating a selection of assessments, according to:

- An annual plan determined by an external body including NZQA, ITO etc
  or

- An approved moderation schedule determined by the department.

iv Departments are responsible for providing moderators with all relevant information, e.g. sample of assessed work, course descriptors and/or course outlines and marking guides within the stated timeframe. Likewise, the agreed moderation arrangements are followed for any other national or collaboratively developed qualifications.

v Moderation activities are recorded at department level so that the following can be verified as needed.

3.3 Consistency Arrangements

In addition to moderation, each Department offering a programme leading to the award of a New Zealand qualification will be required to engage in national consistency arrangements. This will involve participating in periodic national consistency reviews built around the networks involved in assessing learners in programmes. The specifics for consistency arrangements for each programme will be defined in the programme document.

3.4 Conflicts of Interest

Staff are expected to identify and report to the Head of Department any conflict of interest related to their involvement in any student's summative assessment (e.g. a relative, close friend).

The Head of Department is responsible for ensuring appropriate safeguards are put in place to resolve such situations, e.g.

i Student work assessed by an alternative staff member (from Ara or another institution) with the requisite knowledge/skill   *or*

ii Student work co-assessed by the staff member and another person with the requisite knowledge/skill (from Ara, another institution, or the relevant industry/profession)   *or*

iii Assessed work is 'blind' moderated by another person (as in ii, above), along with the assessed work of two other students achieving approximately the same mark on the same assessed work.