

Moderation and Assessment Requirements, Faculty of Engineering.

Preface

The following procedures apply to courses in the Faculty of Engineering and must be read in conjunction with the Assessment Handbook. The procedures add further requirements for assessment and moderation on top of the rules and requirements in the Assessment Handbook.

A risk management principle underlying these procedures is that moderation effort should be directed according to the perceived risk.

(a) Responsibilities regarding the setting, marking, and moderation of assessment tasks.

The Course Coordinator of a course is responsible for:

- Producing the course outline, including the high level design of the assessment structure for the course, and for ensuring that the course outline is moderated.
- Engaging with the course auditor for moderation of the course outline, and approval of the planned moderation processes for the assessment items
- The setting and marking of assessment tasks in a course.
- Ensuring that the approved pre-assessment and post-assessment moderation is carried out for all assessment tasks.
- Ensuring that all tutors involved in marking have had the appropriate training.
- Engaging with the course auditor for moderation of the final grade computation.
- Ensuring that the moderation actions are recorded in the School Moderation Log.

The HoS (or deputy HoS) is responsible for

- Approving proposals for the use of non-academics for marking more than 50% of the assessment of a course (normally before the beginning of the course).
- Approving final grades before they are submitted to student records.

The HoS with the Programme Directors are responsible for

- Appointing an auditor for each course. The auditor must be an academic staff member not otherwise involved in the teaching of the course.
- Identifying courses that require strong moderation, for example, courses that had problems involving assessment in the previous year, new courses, courses coordinated by inexperienced staff or courses with coordinators who have had problems in the previous year of teaching. The additional moderation requirements for such courses will be specified. Courses requiring strong moderation should be assigned auditors who are experienced academics.

The Course Auditor is responsible for

- Moderating the assessment regime of a course presented in the course outline.
- Approving a moderation process for the assessment items in the course, which may or may not involve the auditor directly.
- Moderating the computation of final grades, along with any scaling, application of mandatory course requirements, and exemptions for special cases.
- Recording these moderation steps in the School Moderation Log

(b) Responsibilities regarding the monitoring and reporting on moderation, including the role of the Faculty Board, Academic Committee and/or Learning and Teaching Committee.

The Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for

- Checking whether Course Coordinators have recorded the moderation actions of their courses in the School Moderation Log.
- Reviewing the School Moderation Log and the grade distributions of courses annually to identify any shortcomings in the moderation processes or practices in the School and providing a report with recommendations to the Faculty Board.
- Reporting to the HoS if moderation is not being performed or recorded adequately for any course.
- Reviewing this document annually to check that the procedures are still appropriate.
- Identifying guidelines for standard good assessment practice across the faculty.

Programme Directors are responsible for

- providing advice and guidance on these procedures to staff teaching in their programme.

(c1) Requirements for moderation of Course Design and Course Outline.

Before any course starts, the Course Coordinator must discuss the design of the assessment regime of the course with the Course Auditor. The discussion should include

- the number, nature, timing, and weighting of the assessment items,
- policies and penalties for late submission and any mandatory requirements.
- relationship between the assessment items and the Course Learning Objectives,
- expected workload for the assessment items,
- the appropriateness of the assessment items to the level of the course,
- the ability of the assessment items to provide an appropriate spread of grades.
- planned processes for pre-assessment and post-assessment moderation of assessment items

Where possible, the course should follow standard practices in the faculty; if the course differs from standard faculty practices, the discussion should address the justification for the differences.

Where the course requires strong moderation, it is particularly important that the assessment regime be discussed and examined in detail, taking into account any problems identified in previous offerings of the course.

Where there are disagreements between the Course Coordinator and the Course Auditor, they should consult the Programme Director, Hos, or Associate Dean (Students).

The auditor's approval of the assessment regime in the course outline and the planned moderation processes should be recorded in the School Moderation Log. If the HoS has approved more than 50% of the marking of the course by non-academics, this approval, with the justification, should be recorded in the School Moderation Log.

(c2) Requirements for pre-assessment moderation of assessment tasks and marking criteria.

Except in the cases below, every assessment item must be checked for errors and comprehensibility by an appropriate second staff member (not necessarily an academic) before it is distributed to students.

- An assessment item only needs to be checked the first time it is introduced or when it undergoes significant alteration.
- For assessment items made up of a large number of small tasks (such as multiple short quizzes), only the overall task needs to be checked.
- For courses with around 10 or fewer students, only large assessment items (25% or more) need to be checked in this way, as long as students are given the opportunity to ask for clarifications or corrections on smaller assessment items.

Every assessment item that is new, significantly changed, or has not been moderated in the previous three years, and which contributes at least 25% to the final grade must be checked by another academic staff member (or Senior Tutor) who must check that the assessment item

- is clear about what students are required to do.
- is consistent with the Course Learning Objectives
- constitutes an appropriate workload for students
- includes sufficient information about how marks are allocated for major components of the assessment that students can plan their workload in an informed way
- could be reasonably marked in a consistent way by the staff who will be marking it.

The course coordinator may need to provide a marking guide or model solution to enable the other staff member to check the assignment.

Courses requiring strong moderation may have additional pre-assessment moderation requirements specified by the HoS.

For each assessment item, the pre-assessment moderation and the name of the staff doing the moderation, must be recorded in the School Moderation Log.

(d1) Requirements for post-assessment moderation, especially where there are multiple markers.

Every assessment that is marked should have an appropriate moderation process. The rigour of the process depends on who is doing the marking, the weight of the assessment item, the nature of the assessment item and the size of the class. Marking guides should be constructed for all assessment items to ensure consistency of marking.

Assessment items that are marked by a single academic who set the assessment item do not need post-assessment moderation by other staff.

Where marking is done by anyone other than the course coordinator or the person who set the assessment item, the person who set the assessment item or the course coordinator must discuss the marking guide with the marker(s) before marking starts. Assessment items that are marked by a single person other than the course coordinator or a course lecturer require appropriate moderation by the course coordinator or the course lecturer who set the assignment to ensure consistent and appropriate application of the marking guide.

Where marking of an assessment item (or a component) is done by multiple staff (academic and/or non-academic), a more rigorous moderation process is required to ensure consistency. It is essential that the marking guide is clear and that there is a consistent understanding of the guide by all markers. The use of marking meetings which allow collaboration, cross-checking, and discussion are encouraged. For

assessment items worth more than 20%, some process to demonstrate consistency across markers is required, such as selective double marking, or analysing statistics of marks by different markers. This should be done before marks are returned to students.

Half way through the course, the course coordinator should discuss with the auditor the distribution of marks returned to students in the first half of the course.

Courses requiring strong moderation may have additional post-assessment moderation requirements specified by the HoS.

For each assessment item (or group of similar assessment items), the post-assessment moderation must be recorded in the School Moderation Log.

(d2) Requirements for moderation of the final grade calculation.

After calculating the final grades at the end of the course, the Course Coordinator must discuss the grades and the computation with the Course Auditor. The Course Auditor will

- Check the spreadsheet and the calculations to ensure there are no errors and that it is consistent with the specification in the Course Outline.
- Discuss any scaling and manipulation of grade boundaries to ensure that the process is justified and fair, and that the final grade distribution is within the bounds of faculty norms if possible.
- Discuss the application of mandatory course requirements, ensuring that they are applied fairly, and exploring possible remedies for students with K grades.
- Discuss any exemptions or accommodations for special cases.
- Discuss problems that arose from the assessment and possible approaches to address the problems in the following year.

When the Course Auditor is satisfied with the final grades, the Auditor and the Coordinator will construct a brief statement about the final grades, explaining any scaling that was done, which will also be added to the School Moderation Log.

The Coordinator will send the grades and the brief statement to the School Office who will construct the grade distribution in a standard format and forward to the Head of School. Only when the Head of School has checked and approved the grades, will they be entered in the university student records.

The examiners meeting for final year BE(Hons) students and BSc (Hons) students will also discuss the grade distributions for the 400-level and 300-level courses, checking for significant inconsistencies between the courses. That meeting may make recommendations for changes to courses in the next year, and (in extreme cases) may make changes to the grades for the current year.

(e) Professional development that may be required for examiners and markers, including tutors.

Tutors who are involved in marking assessment above 100-level must have attended the CAD training workshop on assessment marking.

Tutors doing marking in 100-level courses must have either attended the CAD training workshop on assessment marking or attended the ECS 100-level tutor training sessions run by the Senior Tutor.

(f) Restrictions on the amount of each student's work in a course that can be marked by tutors.

Anyone marking assessment items should have a level of knowledge of the subject sufficient to make appropriate marking judgements of incomplete, incorrect, or unusual student work. Normally, this means that marking assessment worth 30% or more in total in 300-level courses should be done by academics, or by PhD students,

Post-Docs, or Senior Tutors who have appropriate expertise in the subject of the course; exceptions must be approved by the Programme Director.

Marking by non-academics of assessment items worth more than a total of 30% in 400/500-level courses is considered unusual and needs approval by the Head of School.

(g) Processes for record keeping, including the format and content for a course report on assessment that includes information on the distribution of grades.

All moderation processes must be recorded in the School Moderation Log.

All spreadsheets for calculating the final grades for a course must be recorded in the School filesystems.

All final grades must be reported via the School office, who will produce standardised distributions for approval by the HoS.

(h) The provision of an overall moderation report following the end of the second trimester to the Faculty Board or Faculty Academic Committee

At the end of each year, the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee will review and report on the moderation processes recorded in the School Moderation Log and on the grade distributions of the courses in that year. The Committee will provide a report to Faculty Board.

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