

Moderation Plan

2012



Reported judgement of student work should be defensible and comparable.

(Principle 10- Report of the Assessment and Reporting taskforce, EQ, 2002)

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WHAT IS MODERATION?

Moderation is a process for developing consistence of assessment judgements across different assessors and sometimes across different programs and schools.

There are THREE key parts to this definition of moderation:

1. Moderation is a process not an event

Moderation requires participation and involvement by the assessors in a way that connects them with other assessors and supports, clarifies and affirms their judgements.

2. Moderation is directed at developing teachers' judgements

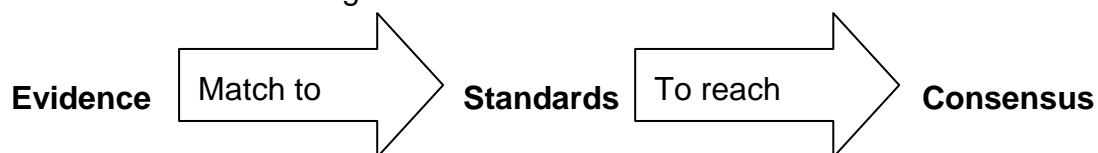
It is not directed at merely "checking up" on teachers' judgements, rather the intention is to work toward greater consistency across teachers.

3. Moderation involves different assessors marking different examples of student work

As it is not possible for **all** assessors to mark the work of **all** students it is therefore not possible to confirm **EVERY** judgement, thus sampling is required.

KEY Points to consider:

- Moderation is an **ACTIVE PROCESS** for developing consensus in assessment judgement not a passive process for determining the existing degree of consistency
- Moderation requires standards descriptors, preferably with exemplars as reference points for judgements.
- The moderation process needs to involve procedures for helping assessors interpret the standard descriptors in consistent ways; and confirming the appropriateness of the assessors' judgements.
- When moderating student work we need to remember THREE words:



- The Moderation process is **INTEGRAL** to the teaching- learning cycle.

NB: To assist us in understanding, planning for and implementing a rigorous and defensible moderation process, Education Queensland have developed a comprehensive guideline (Guidelines for assessing student achievement and moderating teacher judgements' in **P-12 Curriculum Framework** (supporting guidelines; available at <http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/framework/p-12/docs/guidelines-assessing.doc>, pp. 20-22).

WHY DO WE MODERATE?

Moderation provides an opportunity for teachers to achieve **consistency in teacher judgement** through a structured process that allows them to compare judgements in order to either confirm or adjust them.

The process involves close collaboration to establish a shared understanding of what achievement of KLA standards looks like and whether or not the student has demonstrated achievement of that standard. Teachers work towards making judgements that are **consistent and comparable**.

What purposes can moderation serve in supporting consistency in teacher judgement?

- Develop shared or common interpretations of standards and expectations of what constitutes achievement of KLA standards
- Develop shared understandings of what students' achievements look like
- Develop accuracy and reliability in making judgements
- Ensure judgements are equitable in terms of implications for student learning
- Strengthen the value of teachers' judgements
- Inform well-targeted teaching programs
- Make judgements in relation to syllabus standards

Ultimately, we engage in moderation to ensure that reported judgements of student achievement are **defensible and comparable**.

Moderation versus End-of-semester discussion

It is important to distinguish between **moderation** (of one task- this will be just one part of the overall body of work for the KLA that term) and an **end-of semester discussion** which is when a body of student work in one KLA is considered for the purpose of assigning an overall A-E grade for reporting purposes.

- When engaged in moderation we will use **task-specific** criteria and standards sheets to describe standards of student work.
- During end-of-semester discussions we will use the Sunshine Coast Regional Reporting Matrices to describe standards of a body of student work for the purpose of reporting.



THE SOCIAL MODERATION MODEL

Social Moderation

Social moderation is an extended, collaborative process. It is the culmination of a process that delivers multiple opportunities for learning through quality, equitable and well-considered educational experiences.

The ultimate aim of moderation is to achieve comparable grades in a diverse range of authentic assessment tasks across a range of schools in Queensland.

The moderation process can be enacted within a school based context and/or across clusters or regions. While cohesive groups working collaboratively to achieve consensus, on-line models may provide moderation contexts that respond to issues such as distance or like-school groupings.

Social Moderation includes:

- an understanding of the Essential Learnings and Standards
- the identification of curriculum intent
- task design, development and revision
- task implementation in a school, via appropriate pedagogies
- standards-based assessment and grading of students' performance in the task
- a consensus-based approach to understanding the standards
- a consensus-based approach to validating the grades awarded to students.

Teachers will make judgements on several criteria, trading off inconsistencies, to reach a holistic judgement.

Validity is a priority in the assessment of the student work. Moderation involves 'performances on distinct tasks that are rated using a common framework and interpreted in terms of a common standard.' This requires the 'development of consensus on definitions of standards and on the performances that meet those standards'.

For teachers to understand the standards and develop a community of understanding the following factors are required:

- descriptions in words of the standards, dialogue and student work.
- descriptions of the standards provide the basis for focused discussion on the student work.

When teachers are engaging in dialogue they are not just having a conversation about the work and they are not using checklists. They are having substantive, focused conversations about the **differences in the quality of performance.**

CONFERENCE MODEL OF MODERATION

At Kurwongbah, we have chosen the Conference Model as the process for moderation each term.

Using the conference model for moderation, teachers discuss and deliberate in making their judgements about the quality of all of the evidence presented as student work. **Teachers make judgements on several criteria to reach an 'on-balance' holistic judgement.** This is not a procedural approach but one that is based on the teachers' professional knowledge in shared and collaborative decision making.

Teachers mark (some or all) student responses individually, and then select assessment samples representative of their application for A to E standards. They meet with other teachers to discuss their judgements by sharing their samples. Teachers reach a consensus on the interpretation and application of the standards.

Role of a Facilitator

In the Conference Model of social moderation the role of the facilitator may include

- Establishing the moderation environment
- Identifying the curriculum intent
- Leading professional dialogue
- Facilitating conversations that support evidence-based teacher judgement
- Clarifying moderation protocols

It is not expected that the facilitator act as an expert, but rather assist teachers reach consensus through a shared understanding of the curriculum intent and the grade awarded

<http://education.qld.gov.au/qcar/evid-student-ach.html> (accessed 3 September 2008)



PLANNING FOR MODERATION

Factors that make moderation easier:

- where criteria are agreed upon. Using tasks with common aims and criteria enables assessors to know what they are looking for
- where criteria for judgement are explicit and easy to see
- where substantial amounts of work are sought from the student
- where appropriate and realistic tasks are set for particular levels to meet students' capabilities
- where tasks are sufficiently open-ended to allow students to demonstrate more widely across levels
- where details of the context are provided
- where teachers are familiar with the Essential Learnings and Standards and are able to set tasks designed to meet learning outcomes
- where provision is made for pooling and discussing opinions about students' work.

Factors that make moderation difficult:

- where student's work shows insufficient evidence (ensure there is more than one work sample)
- where teachers set tasks which need clarification of what they had been taught and how
- where assessment tasks and Assessment Criteria and Standards Sheets are poorly developed
- when a piece of work shows achievement of standards at more than one level
- where teachers have difficulty interpreting the exact meaning of the KLA standards.

The points below may play a role in moderating students' work:

- the image of the standard(s) in your head
- the criteria set for assessment
- levels of achievement or performance possible
- the quality of the assessment tasks
- the range of contexts evident in assessment
- processes for collegial dialogue and negotiation

Some factors you may need to address in moderating activities:

- understanding the Essential Learnings and Standards: clarifying definitions and wording
- developing similar assessment criteria for tasks as a basis for comparing judgements
- acknowledging and agreeing upon the role of prior knowledge of students
- using multiple task samples versus single task samples
- on-balance judgements versus one-off judgements
- how to construct quality assessment tasks
- developing different and additional indicators

MODERATION PROTOCOLS

Moderation Protocols explain the expectations under which everyone will operate within moderation sessions. At Kurwongbah we agree to operate according to the following norms:

Moderation Protocols

- Adopt a sense of **responsibility** in and for the group
- Attend to others and **listen**
- **Cooperate** in good faith
- Address problems **respectfully** by seeking clarification and understanding, focusing on the student work and not on the teacher who presents it
- Aim for **consensus** in decision-making
- Treat others as you would like to be treated
- **Critique** not criticise
- **Accept** where others are at
- Suspend judgement

AFTER MODERATION

Asking the question- So what?

If Moderation is to truly be a process, not an event, it is important that we use the time after moderation to ask the big questions:

- What are the implications for curriculum?
- What are the implications for unit planning?
- What are the implications for assessment practices?
- What are the implications for assessment task development?
- What are the implications for curriculum alignment?
- What are the implications for the development of rigorous Assessment criteria and standards sheets?
- What are the implications for the quality of teaching?
- What are the implications for the amount of scaffolding and explicit teaching required?
- What are the implications for pedagogy?
- What are the implications for student intervention?
- What are the implications for student learning?

The process that occurs after moderation is essential

This may include:

- Remarking/ readjusting student results
- Profiling student achievement (portfolios)
- Providing feedback to students, teaching teams, cohorts, Curriculum Support Teacher, support teachers and or Admin.
- Revising/ modifying unit plans
- Tightening assessment tasks
- Re-aligning assessment criteria and standards with the curriculum intent
- Examining teaching practices
- Identifying additional explicit teaching opportunities within units to enhance student learning and performance
- Reporting on student work

Reporting:

Consistent reporting is one of the important end-results of the moderation process. Reporting must:

- Describe the quantity and quality of student learning to parents in plain English
- Occur twice-yearly (end of semester one and two)
- Use a five point scale (A-E)
- Use the EQ reporting Template (via the OneSchool student reporting platform)

2012 MODERATION OVERVIEW

	Term One	Term Two	Term Three	Term Four
Prep/One	Week 9 Science Folio/ Assessment task	Week 7- English (Body of work)	Week 9 Science Folio/ Assessment task	Week 7- Mathematics (Body of work)
2/3	Week 9 Science Assessment task	Week 7- English (Body of work)	Week 9 Science Folio/ Assessment task	Week 7- Mathematics (Body of work)
Years 4-7	Week 9 Science Assessment task	Week 7- English (Body of work)	Years 5 & 7: Science Folio/ Assessment task Years 4 & 6: QCATs	Week 7- Mathematics (Body of work)

Appendix A:

Excerpt from 'Guidelines for assessing student achievement and moderating teacher judgements' in ***P-12 Curriculum Framework*** (supporting guidelines; available at <http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/framework/p-12/docs/guidelines-assessing.doc> pp. 20-22)

3.0 Moderation

Moderation is a process that enables teachers (within and across schools) to gain consistency of their judgments against a common, external standard.

The **moderation process** involves teachers discussing the qualities demonstrated in student work samples to reach *consensus* about the standard of the qualities. For example, if one teacher believes that the standard demonstrated against external criteria is an 'A' and another teacher believes the standard demonstrated is evidence of a 'B', a discussion takes place about the qualities of student work that match the standards descriptors. Discussions continue until the teachers reach consensus and agreement. If this cannot be achieved, other teacher/s may be invited to join the discussion.

3.1 Why moderate?

Moderation aims to ensure that standards are applied consistently across the state so that student performances of equivalent standard are recognised as being equivalent and that they are assigned the same grade. The process is a means of providing enhanced teacher and community confidence in the judgments made by teachers of the learning of students, as demonstrated in the assessment evidence they produce.

Students, teachers and the wider community must have confidence that demonstrations of equivalent quality are awarded the same grade. To ensure that reported judgments of student achievement are defensible and comparable they must be based on sound evidence and a shared understanding of the desired standards demonstrated in student work.

To support a shared understanding of standards, samples of student work are provided by the QSA to show different ways in which students may demonstrate the requirements for a particular standard e.g. *QCAR Framework Assessment bank*¹ and Syllabus support materials for Senior syllabuses.²

3.2 Moderation Processes

Informed teacher judgment is at the heart of school-based assessment and requires that clear and shared understandings of standards are established and maintained. This is an ongoing process and should ensure that teachers are able to apply state-wide standards in a consistent manner.

For senior subjects a system of **externally moderated** school-based assessment³ is used. To ensure reliable and comparable assessment of student achievement:

- QSA syllabuses contain the criteria and standards that teachers use to make judgments about student achievements. Before schools offer any subject, they submit programs of study to the QSA. These are reviewed to ensure they meet syllabus requirements.
- External moderation then ensures that the syllabus criteria and standards are consistently implemented across the state. Teachers' judgments about the standards achieved by their students are moderated by the QSA using trained expert panels of teachers from other

¹ <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/assessment/3162.html>

² <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/assessment/qcar.html>

³ <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/assessment/2130.html>

schools. The moderation process differs across the range of subjects to reflect differences in the nature of learning and assessment.

In the early and middle phases of learning **social moderation**⁴ is an extended, collaborative process that includes:

- an understanding of the QCAR Essential Learnings and Standards
- the identification of curriculum intent
- task design, development and revision
- task implementation in a school, via appropriate pedagogies
- standards-based assessment and grading of students' performance in the task
- a consensus-based approach to understanding the standards
- a consensus-based approach to validating the grades awarded to students.

Moderation is a collegiate activity that operates within and across school sites. This activity can be undertaken in ways ranging from *informal* (including teachers having an unstructured, spontaneous discussion), to *formal*, structured discussions between teachers from a range of schools using pre-determined protocols to facilitate interactions and focussing on student work samples.

Informal moderation involves teachers (who teach or share an interest in particular grade level groups) regularly discussing and reaching shared understandings about;

- the intended curriculum statements;
- assessment tasks under development to ensure they align with the intended curriculum and that they are valid, explicit, fair and will produce reliable demonstrations of achievement; and
- standards demonstrated in student work and resulting grades.

Formal moderation activities require system and school administrators to plan for moderation activities based on the size and structure of the school or groups of schools. Small schools may need to work in cluster groups or share samples of students work in meetings or by swapping samples via post or internet.

Moderation activities are invaluable for building teacher capacity in understanding curriculum alignment.⁵ By discussing and reaching consensus around the intent of the curriculum, quality and authenticity of assessment tasks, and understanding of standards, teachers gain a deep understanding of curriculum and their role as enactors of that curriculum. They are also able to share their own quality practices and understandings with one another and, as a result, build strong communities of practice. This type of professional development builds sustainable practices which result in institutionalised quality teaching and learning programs that are consistent and reliable across the state.⁶

There are a number of models associated with existing programs such as Year 12 certification⁷, the QCAR framework⁸, and Year 2 Net⁹.

⁴ <http://www.education.qld.gov.au/qcar/social-mod.html>

⁵ <http://www.education.qld.gov.au/qcar/social-mod.html>, and Teachers Talking to Teachers: social Moderation – conferencing Model (DVD) available in all state schools: contact Curriculum Division

⁶ Timperley et al. (2008). Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES). Ministry of Education, New Zealand.

⁷ See QSA state-wide procedures for moderation in the Senior Phase of Learning <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/certificates/591.html>

⁸ See Education Queensland recommendations for moderation I Years1 – 9 <http://www.education.qld.gov.au/qcar/social-mod.html>

⁹ See <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/assessment/584.html>