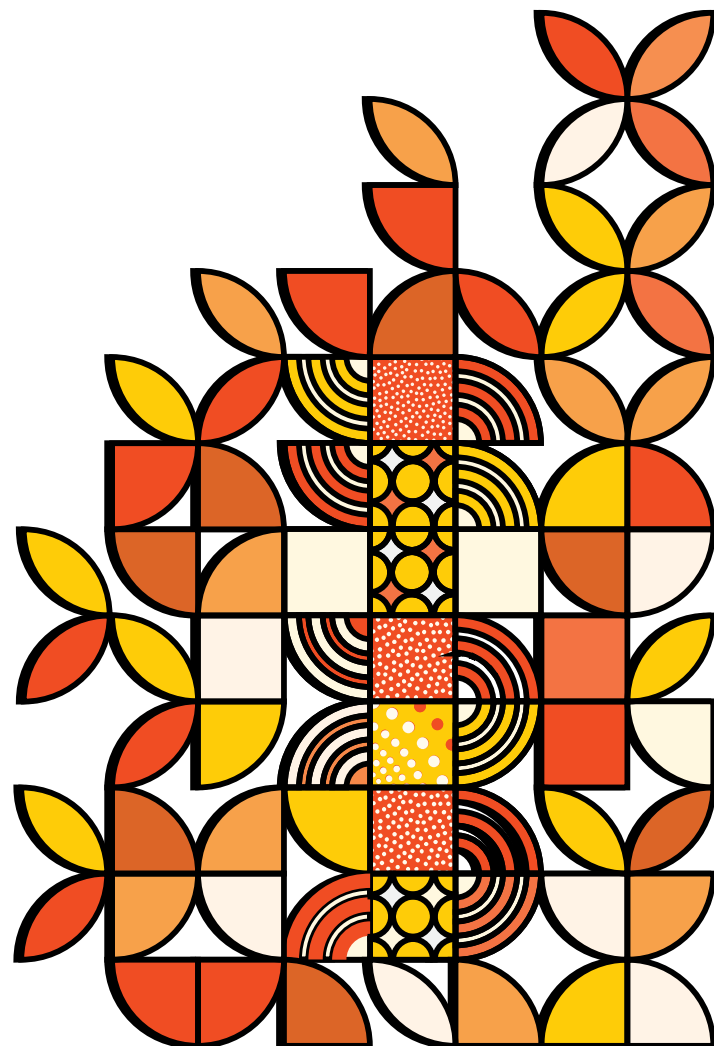# Assessment Design, Moderation and Validation Policy

SECTION 1

Purpose

1. This Policy provides a framework intended to ensure:

   a) Assessment quality assurance processes provide clear guidance for the formal review of assessment design and practice in Higher Education courses of study.

   b) Consistent and appropriate standards of assessment through comprehensive pre-assessment, and, Internal and external post-assessment, moderation processes.

   c) Course and unit materials provided to students contain clearly-stated learning outcomes and current learning resources, and that students understand what is expected to satisfactorily complete the requirements of courses.

   d) Unit assessment tasks are stated unambiguously, consistent with internal and external curriculum principles for the course and the learning outcomes for the unit, and that they are appropriately and fairly weighted and are applied consistently irrespective of the place and mode of delivery.

   e) Everyone involved in course delivery and assessment has a shared understanding of the principles in the Assessment Policy and will make informed assessment judgments that are transparent and applied consistently to all students.

Scope

2. This Policy applies to all:

   a) Higher education courses at Institute of Health & Management (IHM).

   b) students, staff, and others associated with, or contracted by, IHM who are responsible for assessment in these courses.

Suite documents

3. This Policy is linked to the following:

   a) Assessment Design, Moderation and Validation Procedure

   b) See also the associated information listed in the 'Related Internal Documents' in Section 3 below.

SECTION 2

Policy

4. **Principles**

   a) All students receive fair and equitable treatment about the assessment and marking of their achievement of Unit and Course Learning Outcomes.

   b) Courses and Units include a variety of assessment types consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed.

   c) Comprehensive design and moderation processes ensure that assessment methods are fit for purpose, valid, reliable, and effective.

   d) The number of assessments for each unit is manageable within the context of student workload demands across the course of study.

   e) Assessment design and the quality process is transparent to students and teaching staff.

   f) Assessment is moderated and validated internally and externally to meet the higher education and professional accreditation requirements.

5. **Assessment Purpose**

   a) The Purposes of Assessments are to:

      a. ensure that students know what is expected of them to learn and excel in their studies.

      b. guide, encourage, evaluate and assign grades to student learning, fairly and reliably, by ensuring that assessment tasks are aligned with the stated learning outcomes which in turn reflect course and unit learning outcomes.

      c. discover areas of strength and weakness in a student's knowledge and provide positive and informative feedback designed to help them improve their future performance.

      d. encourage students to focus their efforts on developing appropriate knowledge, understandings, and skills.

      e. prepare students for life-long self-assessment and the professional judgment of others.

      f. identify students who have achieved excellence, for example in determining winners of scholarships.

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    g.   measure and certify performance at the end of a course against established criteria and standards so that the level of competency is communicated externally, including to employers and accrediting bodies.

    h.   ensure that the IHM's courses comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), and assessment practices are consistent with the level of attainment required before a qualification is granted by the IHM.

6. **Assessment Principles**

  a)   IHM's approach to assessment practice is guided by the following principles designed to enhance the learning experience and achievement of learning outcomes:

    a.   Assessment aligns with intended learning outcomes

    b.   The assessment addresses Graduate Attributes

    c.   Assessment practices have a substantial impact on student learning

    d.   The assessment provides high quality and timely feedback to students

    e.   Courses and units include a variety of assessment types

    f.   Assessment is inclusive and equitable

    g.   Assessment is valid and reliable

    h.   The assessment information is readily available and should be communicated to all students.

    i.   The amount of assessed work is manageable

    j.   Assessment is designed to promote and educate students about academic integrity and minimise academic misconduct

    k.   The assessment quality process is transparent to students and teaching staff.

7. **Assessment items**

  a)   An assessment item is a single component of the overall assessment structure for a unit of study.

  b)   Assessment items may also be referred to as assessment tasks or tools.

  c)   An assessment structure for a unit of study will contain one or more assessment items.

  d)   IHM will provide students with details of each assessment item including the following:

    a.   Performance criteria and standards of knowledge, skills, competencies, and/or capabilities;

    b.   Due dates for completion;

    c.   Demonstration of the alignment to the relevant learning outcomes;

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d. Details of how results and feedback will be provided.

e) IHM maintains a record of assessment structures, items, and marking criteria for 7 years and determines the following:

   a. Roles and accountabilities of academic staff in relation to setting and approving assessment items.

   b. Processes to ensure the validity and reliability of assessment items.

   c. Processes to ensure that assessment items are consistent with relevant academic standards, including the requirements of professional bodies.

f) When approving assessment items for units of study, IHM should ensure:

   a. Consistency with IHM's Assessment Principles;

   b. Alignment with the accredited unit learning outcomes;

   c. Equivalency of assessment in variations for alternative learning modes or locations;

   d. Clarity of the information provided to students regarding the assessment criteria, requirements, and processes.

8. **Assessment Quality Assurance**

a) Assessment quality assurance is a process that occurs in addition to the day-to-day continuous improvement activities expected in the unit and course design and delivery. This includes:

   a. Review cycles will occur as part of assessment design, development and continuous improvement processes.

   b. The validation of assessment tools and processes before and after use.

   c. Moderation of assessment outcomes, for the appropriate and consistent marking of student work.

   d. Periodic benchmarking of assessment to ensure calibration of standards at discipline, national, and international level.

9. **Quality Assurance, Review, Moderation, and Validation**

a) Quality assurance of assessment should occur at both the course and the unit level.

b) Quality assurance of assessment must be maintained at every stage of the assessment cycle.

c) Assessment tasks will be subject to routine review processes to ensure that they

   a. reflect appropriate assessment design, including their fit with unit learning outcomes

b. focus on higher-order learning

c. use appropriate assessment criteria, and

d. align with the unit's learning outcomes.

d) Units offered across campuses must be developed to ensure that they have equivalent assessment tasks with the same learning outcomes and graduate attributes at the same standards.

e) Approved variation is possible, but equivalence should be demonstrable, and no students should be advantaged or disadvantaged relative to students undertaking the unit at another campus or location or in another study mode.

f) Moderation will be undertaken in all units to ensure the assessment criteria and standards used when markings are consistent across all markers in the same unit regardless of learning mode and campus location.

g) Lecturers are responsible for establishing a quality assurance regime for the assessment in courses and units.

h) This will include both internal and external moderation and benchmarking of assessment.

i) Evidence of moderation must be provided with the recommended grades and marks provided to Academic Board.

j) Students should be informed that it is routine practice for samples of students' work to be used for moderation.

10. **Quality Assurance Unit Reviews**

a) Comprehensive review of Unit learning materials involves a comprehensive analysis of the content of the Unit Outline across all Unit offerings, including:

a. The appropriateness of all learning materials to the assumed knowledge for the unit and the level of the award.

b. The currency and suitability of the learning materials, as well as the clarity and tone of the communication with students.

c. An appraisal of the relation between the unit and the intended course learning outcomes.

d. An appraisal of the extent to which previous moderation reviews, feedback, and comments have been addressed.

b) Review of assessment tasks reaffirms the fairness, clarity, and standards of the assessment tasks before they are used.

c) Assessment tasks will be subject to pre-assessment moderation to ensure that:

   a. They are appropriately aligned with the learning outcomes of the course of study.

   b. Assessments are fair and feasible, take into consideration adjustments that may be required for students with disabilities and that reasonable weighting are applied for each task.

   c. Assessments are appropriately spaced throughout the study period and achievable by students in the allocated timeframe.

   d. Assessment content and instructions are presented using plain English, so that students understand what is required of them to achieve a given grade, in accordance with the Assessment Principles Policy.

   e. The academic challenge they demand of students is consistent with the level of the award for the course.

11. **Moderation Process**

   a) The objective of moderation is to verify that the assessment information including the marking criterion as provided to students yields consistent and fair performance evaluation by the marking team for a given unit. It is therefore focused on the **consistency** of the assessment evaluation.

   b) Moderation activities typically involve the Unit Coordinator undertaking a review of a sample of assessed work after final unit assessment, as provided by each of the unit teaching staff.

   c) Where the unit is delivered in more than one location or mode of delivery, samples from each of these must be represented.

12. **Moderators**

   a) Moderators will be experienced staff, with appropriate skills.

   b) Moderators may be staff currently teaching or marking in the Unit.

   c) The Academic Dean may also be the moderator if they have the appropriate skills and knowledge.

   d) Moderators cannot moderate their marking or Unit outlines.

   e) It is expected that moderators will be provided with appropriate training.

13. **The role of Internal Assessment Moderation**

   a) The role of assessment moderators is defined as including:

a. Reviewing the appropriateness of all assessment items as specified in the Unit outlines and recommending improvements if any;

b. Moderating or endorsing the marked progressive assessments (e.g. mid-term, assignments) during the term and recommending improvements if any;

c. Reviewing the appropriateness of end-of-term assessment (i.e. final examination) during the term and recommending improvements if any;

d. Moderating or endorsing the marked end-of-term assessment after the exam period and recommending improvements if any;

b) Ensuring all assessment items comply with the current IHM Policies.

14. **The Role of External Benchmarking for Moderation**

a) External moderation involves benchmarking learning outcomes, assessment practices and outcomes, and grade distributions with similar accredited courses offered by other higher education providers to ensure comparability of standards and to gain feedback for ongoing review and improvement.

b) As specified by TEQSA's course accreditation standards: "The academic standards intended to be achieved by students and the standards achieved by students in the course of study are benchmarked against similar accredited courses of study offered by other higher education providers."

15. **The Nature of Moderation**

a) The minimum requirement at IHM is that moderation of all learning materials and assessments for each Unit will be undertaken at least once per year.

b) IHM has three phases for moderation such as pre-delivery moderation; moderation during delivery; post-delivery moderation.

16. **Moderation During Delivery**

a) Moderation during delivery includes checking the consistency of marking of the assessment tasks and grading process against the assessment/marking criteria and related standards to ensure consistency across groups of students in the same unit, as well as reviewing all grades before approval and communication to students.

17. **Post-Delivery Moderation**

a) Post-Delivery moderation is an examination of the effectiveness of the moderation process and includes a formal reflection on moderation methods used.

18. **The Frequency of Moderation of the Three Phases**

    a) Internal Pre-Delivery, During-Delivery, and Post-Delivery moderation should be carried out at least once per year for each Unit.

19. **Validation of Assessment**

    a) The objective of assessment validation is to verify that the assessment effectively targets the intended learning outcomes and objectives either prior to a teaching period, or following a teaching period whereby the observed student performance is included in the evidence to be considered. It is therefore focused on the likely or observed student performance as a result of assessment design.

    b) Validation of assessment is an ongoing process that must be integrated into the course and assessment design, delivery, and review of the overall assessment strategy and activities.

    c) Validation activities typically involve a review of the assessment or examination paper and marking scheme or rubric intended or actually distributed to students. The process will be documented and analysed to facilitate future improvement to assessment.

    d) Validation involves checking that the assessment tool is likely to produce valid, reliable, efficient, fair, and authentic evidence for assessment of the intended learning outcomes and objectives.

    e) Validators are asked to:

        a. Review the unit outline, course content, and structure. They are to evaluate against the Principles of Assessment and Graduate Attributes.

        b. Review the graded assessments; and

        c. Complete a Validation Report.

SECTION 3

Associated Information

Related Internal Documents	• Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy • Academic Honesty and Integrity Procedure • Assessment Design, Moderation and Validation Procedure • Benchmarking Policy • Benchmarking Procedure • Course Design and Development Policy • Course Design and Development Procedure • Course Review and Evaluation Policy

	• Course Review and Evaluation Procedure • Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy • Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure • IHM Benchmarking Document template • IHM Course Curriculum Template • IHM Course Proposal Template (IHM-CPT) • IHM Mapping Document Template • IHM Session Plan Template • Learning and Teaching Plan • Learning and Teaching Policy • Learning and Teaching Procedure • Student Assessment and Examination Policy • Student Assessment and Examination Procedure • Student Selection and Admission Policy • Student Selection and Admission Procedure • Unit Guide Template
Related Legislation, Standards, and Codes	• Australian Qualifications Framework (2013) • Higher Education Support Act (2003) • Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 • National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to • Overseas Students (2018) • Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Act (2011)
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Change History

Version Control		
Change Summary	Date	Short description of the change, incl version number, changes, who considered, approved etc
Version 3	02/12/2020	• Added rubric, standards, Summative assessment, to the definition • Reworded subjects to units • Replaced Director, QA with Academic Dean • version 3, approved by Academic Board on 02/12/2020
Version 4	03/08/2022	• Wells Advisory provided a review of all Course Design and related policies and procedures (May 2022) • Version 3 amended as follows: • Minor edits to definitions

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		• Aligned to HESF 2021 standards
		• Approved by Academic Board on 03/08/2022
Version 4.1	22/11/2023	• The definitions have been relocated to the IHM glossary and the template has been updated.
Version 5.0	14/06/2024	• Renamed "Moderation and Validation Policy" (version 4.1) as "Assessment Design, Moderation and Validation Policy" (version 5.0) • Revision in line with associated procedure clarifying order or moderation and validation • Inclusion of assessment design content as merged from assessment policy to be archived • Feedback from Academic Board incorporated • Approved by Academic Board on 14/06/2024

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