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## Guide to Standardisation and Moderation

### Overview

Veritas Mediation Academy's Assessment Policy outlines the fundamental principles and processes governing student assessments. This policy serves as the primary reference for marking, standardisation, and moderation.

### Verification

#### Definition

Verification ensures that assessment tasks and briefs are appropriate, fair, and valid by aligning them with learning outcomes and maintaining an appropriate level of challenge.

#### When to Conduct Verification

All assignment tasks and briefs must be verified before they are distributed to students.

#### Verification Process

The following steps need to be considered when conducting verification:

- Ensure consistency across modules of the same level and discipline.
- Confirm that learning outcomes are fully addressed by the assignment.
- Check that assessment criteria and grade descriptors align with expected standards.
- Internally verified assessments, including exams and grading criteria, must be submitted to the External Examiner for review.

#### Verification Checklist

- All assessment tasks must be internally verified before release.
- Verify alignment with course-level learning outcomes and standards.
- Review assessments for clarity in instructions (e.g., avoiding ambiguous language).

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## Example of Verification in Practice

Scenario: A module leader designs an assignment requiring students to write a mediation report. During verification:

1. The verifier checks whether the task aligns with learning outcomes such as "Demonstrate effective mediation techniques."
2. The verifier ensures grade descriptors clearly distinguish between levels of performance (e.g., pass vs. distinction).
3. Feedback from previous cohorts is reviewed to identify areas for improvement in task clarity.

## Standardisation

### Definition

Standardisation ensures that all assessors have a shared understanding of marking standards, conventions, and feedback expectations.

### When to Conduct Standardisation

Standardisation is recommended in cases such as:

- Introduction of new or revised assessments.
- Multiple assessors grading the same work.
- New or temporary teaching staff.
- Delivery across multiple locations or partner institutions.

### Standardisation Process

Standardisation takes place before marking begins and requires assessors to independently evaluate a sample of student work, assigning grades based on predetermined criteria. Once individual grading is completed:

1. Assessors meet to discuss their evaluations and establish a consensus on the appropriate grade, which serves as a benchmark for marking consistency across the module.
2. Discussions clarify key aspects of the marking process, such as penalties for missing required elements or feedback expectations.
3. If disagreements arise during discussions, assessors may refer to past submissions or consult module leaders for resolution.

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## Standardisation Checklist

- Annual standardisation must occur for modules delivered by different teaching teams.
- Standardisation is required before marking begins for assessments with new or multiple markers.
- All summative assessments require a standardisation exercise.
- The date of the standardisation exercise must be documented and submitted to Veritas' Quality Administrator.

## Example of Standardisation in Practice

Scenario: A team of three assessors is grading a reflective journal assignment for a mediation module delivered across two teaching teams:

1. Each assessor independently grades three sample submissions representing high, medium, and low-performance levels.
2. During the meeting, discrepancies in grading are identified (e.g., one assessor awarded higher marks for creativity while others focused on technical accuracy).
3. The team agrees on a balanced approach that values both creativity and technical accuracy equally.

## Double Marking

### Definition

Double marking involves two assessors reviewing the same student work and agreeing on a final grade.

### Types of Double Marking

#### 1. Blind Double Marking:

- Two assessors independently mark and justify their grading without prior knowledge of each other's evaluations.
- Grades and comments are recorded separately before comparison.
- Discrepancies are discussed and resolved to produce a final agreed grade.

#### 2. Non-Blind Double Marking:

- The first assessor marks and comments on the work.

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- The second assessor reviews the initial grading before assigning their own.
- A final agreed grade and feedback are provided to the student.

### When to Use Double Marking

Blind Double Marking: Required for all substantive essay writing.

Non-Blind Double Marking: Used for pass/fail boundaries, work by new staff, new or innovative assignments, or when re-marking is necessary.

### Double Marking Checklist

- New or inexperienced staff must have their assessments double-marked.
- All substantive essay writing must be blind double-marked.
- Failed assessments must be sampled through non-blind marking.

### Example of Double Marking in Practice

Scenario: An essay is blind double-marked by two senior assessors:

1. Assessor A awards 70%, citing strong critical analysis but notes minor formatting errors.
2. Assessor B awards 65%, emphasizing formatting issues while acknowledging critical analysis strengths.
3. After discussion, they agree on a final grade of 68%, balancing both perspectives.

## **Moderation**

### Definition

Moderation ensures fair and consistent application of assessment criteria across all student work.

### Types of Moderation

#### 1. Internal Moderation:

Conducted by VMA's staff to confirm consistency in grading and feedback through sample reviews.

#### 2. External Moderation:

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Conducted by External Examiners who validate academic standards by reviewing at least 15% of submissions.

### Moderation Checklist

#### Internal Moderation:

1. Applied to all summative assessments where other moderation forms do not apply.
2. Must be completed within 20 working days before provisional grades are released.

#### External Moderation:

1. External Examiners should receive statistical breakdowns of grades per delivery teaching team.
2. A moderation report must be completed and sent to External Examiners.

### Example of Moderation in Practice

#### Internal Moderation:

A second assessor reviews five randomly selected essays from a cohort submission:

1. Identifies inconsistencies in feedback tone between markers (e.g., overly critical vs constructive).
2. Suggests adjustments to ensure feedback aligns with institutional guidelines.

#### External Moderation:

An External Examiner reviews 15% of submissions from two campuses delivering the same module:

1. Confirms alignment with national standards but notes discrepancies in pass rates between campuses.
2. Recommends further investigation into delivery methods from each teaching team.

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