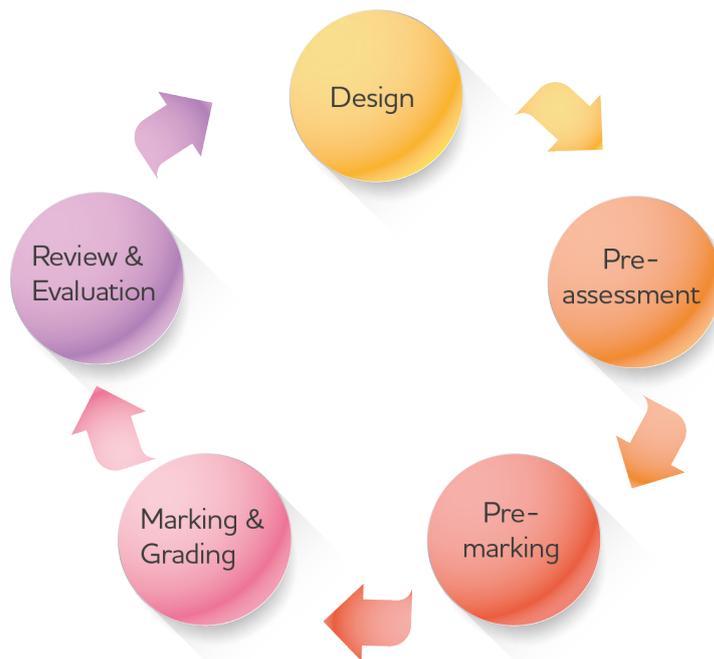


# Consensus Moderation Essentials

Consensus moderation is required for all units and courses. It is the process used to ensure comparability and equivalence of assessment practices within units and courses.

Consensus moderation includes examination of the validity and reliability of assessment results and can be broadly defined as peer review that results in calibration and consensus being achieved (Nulty, 2017).

The Consensus Moderation Model below defines key phases of the process.



## Design (before commencement of the teaching period)

During the Design phase the focus of moderation is on ensuring **validity**. Validity is the degree to which a task assesses what it is intended to assess (and does not assess anything else). All assessment tasks and related marking and grading criteria must be explicitly aligned to learning outcomes.

Where a unit is offered across different locations and/or modes and/or teaching periods within the one calendar year, the learning outcomes must be the same and, other than in exceptional circumstances, there may be no variation in assessments and related marking and grading criteria.

### Moderation activities during this stage include:

- Providing marking guides with clear criteria and standards to ALL members of the teaching team
- Communicating with ALL members of the teaching team to ensure shared understanding of **alignment** between assessment tasks, marking criteria and learning outcomes

## Pre-assessment (before handing out the assessment task)

During this phase the focus is on developing a shared understanding of task specifications, requirements, performance criteria and standards.

### **Moderation activities during this stage include:**

- Practice marking sample tasks from previous years (where available)
- Workshops (using Skype or Zoom) with all staff involved in the assessment, before tasks are handed out, involving comparison and justification of judgements using work samples

## Pre-marking (before marking begins)

During this phase the focus is on ensuring markers are able to identify qualities of student work at various standards. This phase facilitates consistency of judgements and marking fairness. It can save a great deal of time and effort in subsequent assessment moderation phases.

### **Moderation activities during this stage include:**

- Circulating a small number of submitted tasks, to be marked by ALL markers and results shared
- Discussion to reach consensus about how marking criteria are to be interpreted and applied

## Marking and grading

During this phase the focus is on developing quality and consistency of judgements and fairness in the marking processes. This phase is critical to ensuring **grade integrity**.

### **Moderation activities during this stage may include:**

- Exchange marking, where markers exchange student work so that they mark their colleague's student work rather than their own
- Double marking, where two markers mark the same piece of work. Comments and marks of the original marker are visible to the second marker
- Blind marking, where two markers mark the same piece of work and the second marker does NOT see the comments or marks of the original marker
- Review sample of marked tasks at all grade boundaries
- Exchange two Fails and two Higher Distinctions to ensure agreement on Fails and HDs
- External examination/peer review of work at different performance standards (top grades, borderline pass grades and a selection of mid-range grades)

## Review and evaluation

During this phase the focus is on analysing results of the assessment and consensus moderation process to identify improvements for the future.

### **Moderation activities during this stage include:**

- Reflection on feedback from students and staff to inform revision of assessment tasks, marking criteria and moderation processes
- Development of annotated samples of student responses at different standards

## References

Nulty, D., & Ashford-Rowe, K.H. (2010). Developing consensus moderation practices to support comprehensive quality assurance of assessment standards, internal project, Griffith University.