Moderation and Quality Assurance

1. Purpose

UniSmarter undertakes internal and external moderation processes as a quality assurance mechanism to ensure validity and reliability of expected learning outcomes, assessment tasks, marking criteria and final grades.

2. Application

This policy is applicable to all the Online Module Coordinators (OMC) and Online Module Facilitators (OMF) involved in grading students' assignments.

3. Principles

Internal moderation is designed to ensure that the teaching teams within modules are making consistent and accurate assessment decisions in accordance with the criteria defined for the assessment item.

External moderation with the Navitas Quality Assurance (QA) representative is designed to verify the validity of assessment instruments and reliability of assessment decisions made by the teaching team at UniSmarter.

The table below provides the Navitas institutions that will conduct the external QA for each program:

Program	Navitas QA institution
Undergraduate diploma modules (Business and Commerce)	SIBT
Pre-Masters Program modules	University Partnerships Europe

External moderation may be undertaken before or after the release of final grades. External moderation undertaken before the release of final grades may result in adjustment of final grades.

Within the context of this policy, the process of external moderation undertaken after the release (publication) of final grades is referred to as 'benchmarking'. Outcomes of benchmarking activities in this context do not affect final grades but are acted upon in the application of standards for future marking practices.

4. Internal Moderation of Assessment

As part of the internal moderation of assessment, UniSmarter's Learning Design team ensures that the module guide, assessments and the marking rubrics are developed in accordance with the learning objectives for the module as outlined by the Navitas partner institution. The Learning Design team will seek approval for all three elements (guide, assessments, marking rubrics) before the start of the module study period.

The Learning Design team will also be available to the teaching team to clarify assessment requirements and ensure consistency of expectations as required. See Section 6 (*External Moderation of Module Outlines & Assessment Instruments*) for more detail.

The Online Module Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring consistency in the understanding of the assessments across Online Module Facilitators through pre-assessment meetings and other internal moderation practices. All Online Module Facilitators will implement identical assessment items and marking criteria.

Prior to the implementation of assessment, Online Module Coordinators will meet with Online Module Facilitators, via tele/video conference, to discuss assessment tasks and the solutions/marking.

The module teaching team will also provide feedback to the Learning Design team where the assessments or marking rubrics are unclear or there is potential for a discrepancy around expectations.

5. Internal Moderation of Marking

Where there are multiple markers involved in the marking of assessment items within a module, internal moderation of both formative and summative assessments will occur prior to the publishing of marks.

Moderation allows for scrutiny of all marks generated by the marking team in order to verify the appropriateness of the marking and also to bring a second judgement, particularly in relation to very good or very poor performance.

Internal moderation may take the form of:

- detailed and agreed upon marking criteria;

- detailed and agreed upon exam solutions;

- cross or shared marking between classes;

- double marking of fails and HD's and/or of a sample of other grades;

- any other suitable method that allows for the moderation of marks awarded within a team situation.

In situations where more than one Online Module Facilitator is involved, the Online Module Coordinator is initially responsible for examining the distribution of marks awarded by each of the markers. This process identifies where Online Module Facilitators are awarding marks outside of the average or general trend within the unit.

In instances where an Online Module Coordinator identifies a problem with a particular marker, they should discuss the situation with the relevant Online Module Facilitator. Where the Online Module Coordinator discovers discrepancies without a valid explanation, they will consult the Navitas Program Convenor to discuss the options that may be available.

The internal moderation process will be managed by the Online Module Coordinator. As a contingency, where it is not possible for Online Module Facilitators to jointly take part in moderation, a selection of submissions from both groups and from all markers, will be moderated by the Online Module Coordinator.

6. External Moderation of Module Outlines and Assessment Items

UniSmarter online modules are designed by UniSmarter's Learning Design team and launched after prior relevant approvals from the Navitas Program Convenor. These modules are subject to curriculum design (learning outcomes, content and assessment) principles as applied within the relevant Navitas College whose underlying curriculum is being adapted for online delivery.

Before the beginning of each study period, the Navitas Program Convenor reviews module outlines to ensure that the UniSmarter curriculum aligns with the equivalent module being adapted from the relevant Navitas College. The review involves scrutiny of the learning outcomes, content and assessments. In particular, this process ensures that:

- assessments are broadly consistent across both the UniSmarter's online module and the underlying module from the relevant Navitas College; and that

- assessment items are designed to reliably assess performance against stated learning outcomes within each module.

The UniSmarter Learning Design team will be responsible for managing the approval of the module outlines before the start of the study period.

Prior to the finalisation of assessments for each study period, the UniSmarter Learning Design team will share with the Navitas Program Convener up to two proposed major (significantly weighted) assessment items (typically this would include final examination papers). The Navitas Program Convenor will undertake an assessment of the proposed assessment item and confirm the validity and reliability of the assessment instrument.

To ensure the integrity of assessment for the final examinations for the same module across multiple examination centres on-site or through online examination platforms, examinations will be implemented on the same date and at the same time, on each centre or location, and submission dates of other assessment will be synchronised to ensure no student is able to take advantage of a marked item before theirs is due. If for any reason, a synchronised exam isn't offered, the exam questions will be substantially different, but of similar difficulty levels, for the students.

7. External Moderation of Marking

The Online Module Coordinator will upload a relevant sample of submissions on the 'Dropbox' for external moderation of marking by a Navitas Program Convenor.

A final examination may or may not be conducted depending on the nature of the module and assessment items. For modules where no final exam is conducted / planned / required, the largest assessment in terms of total weightage will be presented for external moderation; whereas for modules where final examinations are conducted, marked final exam scripts will be presented.

If a Final Exam is conducted:

- in each Study Period, once all internal moderation processes for final examinations have been undertaken, a 10% sample of marked final examination scripts (across all grades) is provided to the relevant Navitas Program Convenor for moderation prior to the release of final grades. Examination scripts are moderated to ensure comparability of marking standards between UniSmarter and the relevant Navitas College.

If a Final Exam is not conducted:

- a 10% sample (representing the spread of grades) of the largest assessment may be externally moderated by the relevant Navitas Program Convenor for each module where no final examination is implemented.

In both cases, the Online Module Coordinator is responsible for providing a sample of completed assessments to the Navitas Program Convenor for external moderation. As an internal moderation process will have occurred prior to external moderation, samples should be a valid representation of the standard applied across all facilitators.

The Navitas Program Convenor will liaise with the relevant Online Module Coordinator to effect any necessary remarking of examination scripts or adjustment of grades to be awarded, prior to the release of grades, as a result of the moderation process.

Where timely external moderation is not possible due to unforeseen circumstances, outcomes will be actioned as per appropriate prior approvals secured by the UniSmarter Learning Design team, before implementation of the final examination in the following study period.

8. Benchmarking of Final Examination Scripts

Each Study Period, once all internal moderation processes have been undertaken, a 10% sample of final examination scripts across all grades for the modules not moderated in that study period is provided to the relevant Navitas Program Convenor. These examination scripts are benchmarked to ensure comparability of marking standards between the UniSmarter teaching team and Navitas Institutes.

9. External Moderation of End of Unit Grades

Prior to the release of results for each Study Period, the Assessment Committee meets to moderate the final grades. Online Module Coordinators may also be invited to attend committee meetings to provide relevant information wherever necessary.

The Assessment Committee, as part of the moderation process, undertakes an evaluation of the spread of grades in order to assess whether the assessment tasks and interpretation of marking rubric have been appropriate. As a result of this evaluation, the Assessment Committee may amend grade distributions where anomalies are identified. The Assessment Committee will consider grades from all modules offered within a Study Period.

10. Related documents

- UniSmarter Moderation and QA Procedure
- Assessment Committee ToR

Amendment History

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