FHEC

Guidelines	External moderation of FQF National Qualifications 1 - 6

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Related FHEC documents: policies / procedures / guidelines, *etc.*	Policy 3-1: Assessment of FQF Qualifications 1 - 6 Policy 3-3: External Moderation of FQF National Qualifications 1 – 6 3-3a-Procedures: External Moderation of FQF National Qualifications 1 – 6

1.0 Purpose of external moderation

1.1. External moderation, co-ordinated by the FHEC, is applied to an assessment conducted for Fiji National Qualifications (NQs).

1.2. Moderation is a quality review process. It involves checking that the assessment tool produced valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgements to be made as to whether the requirements of the relevant aspects of the standard has been met. It includes reviewing and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes.

1.3.   The primary purpose of external moderation is continuous improvement of assessment practice. The focus of the moderation activities is on the assessment tools used and assessor judgements made.

2.0   External moderation

Approach

2.1.   External moderation will take a consensus panel approach involving assessors reviewing their own and other colleagues' assessment tools and judgements (outcomes) as part of a group.

2.2.   The meetings shall be led by an FHEC appointed external moderator who will provide guidance and lead the review. Typically, the meetings are based on the agreement within the group on the appropriateness of assessment tool and assessor judgements for a particular unit standard. However, the moderator shall direct the discussions and ensure that justifiable decisions are made as to the validity of the assessment and of the assessor judgements.

2.3.   Consensus meetings allow for assessors to share resources, ideas and good practice.

Principles

2.4.   External moderation using a consensus panel approach is based on some key understandings:

- HEIs and their assessors must cooperate and participate in the external moderation process to be able to deliver and/or assess National Qualifications.
- That the process is focussed on continuous improvement
- No learner is disadvantaged by the process, i.e. their reported result is not changed.
- Moderators and assessors are to confirm that they will abide by a Code of Practice at the start of moderation sessions, based on the principles below.

External Moderation Principles

Confidentiality
It is important for the success and effectiveness of external moderation that information and details of individuals (e.g. assessors and learners) and HEIs are responsibly and discreetly treated.
This means that confidentiality is maintained, including the details of the learner, assessor, assessment tool developer, and the HEI.

Strategies to maintain confidentiality include:
- De-identifying learner and assessor names and HEI information on learner work, assessment tools, and/or recording sheets.
- Moderation discussions are conducted in a supportive and confidential environment.
- Reporting of moderation is focussed on the quality of assessment and assessment judgements and not on individuals.

Educative

As external moderation is based on a principle of continuous improvement and is a collaborative process it is important to provide constructive feedback in discussions and reporting processes.

Strategies to promote moderation as an educative process include:
- Feedback is provided in a positive manner, provides the reasoning behind the comments, and allows the opportunity for suggested improvements.
- Opportunities to explore and reflect on practice.

Representative

It is not possible to review all unit standards, all learner work, and assessor judgements at any one time and therefore a sample of unit standards and learner work and assessor judgements are undertaken.

Strategies to support the representative nature of moderation include:
- Use a sampling technique of unit standards and learner work based on an identified level of risk but can also include an element of random selection.
- Learnings gained should be deployed throughout the National Qualifications.

Roles of FHEC coordinator, external moderators, HEIs and assessors

2.5.   The FHEC is responsible for:

- Selecting, training and managing external moderators;
- Planning and scheduling external moderation sessions;
- Guiding external moderators in the sampling process;
- Direct point of contact between the Commission and HEIs;
- Reporting of outcomes to HEIs and taking action as required;
- Addressing any complaints raised by the external moderator and HEIs;
- Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of moderation e.g. cost; and
- Effectiveness, continuous improvement, impact on quality assessments.

2.6.   The FHEC appointed external moderator is an independent person who has acknowledged expertise to lead moderation activities and to confirm that assessment results reflect the outcomes of intended unit standards. Moderators will provide advice to FHEC on any actions to be taken.

2.7. HEIs (and their assessors) are responsible for:

- Having one point of contact within its institution for communicating with the FHEC and facilitating the attendance and participation of their assessors.
- Responding promptly and accurately to request from FHEC regarding units taught, participating learners, and information pertaining to assessors, assessor judgements, related data
- Providing assessment tools and learner work and assessor judgements (and records) consistent with the sample requested
- Participating in external moderation panel meetings
- As a response to recommendations, implementing actions for improvement in relation to the sampled assessment tools and for unit standards in their scope of business.

3.0 Assessment and assessment tools

Principles of good assessment

3.1. Assessment, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessment, should meet the principles of assessment. The principles of assessment include:

- Validity: Validity is concerned with the extent to which an assessment decision, which is based on evidence of performance, is justified.
- Reliability: Reliability is concerned with how accurate or precise the tasks are; how much error is included in the evidence; that the evidence is consistently interpreted; and that assessment outcomes are comparable across assessors.
- Fairness: Fairness is concerned with considering the individual learner's needs and characteristics, and any reasonable adjustments to assessment that need to be applied.
- Flexibility: Flexibility is concerned with reflecting the needs and characteristics of the individual learner, providing recognition of prior learning, and drawing on a range of methods appropriate to the context.

Quality evidence

3.2. The principles of quality evidence provide guidance for the evaluation of learner evidence. Evidence should be:

- Valid: the evidence relates to the standard being assessed.
- Authentic: the evidence is the learner's own work.

- Sufficient: the quality and quantity of evidence enable a judgement to be made.
- Current: the evidence is from the present or the recent past.

Assessment tools

3.3.   Assessment tools include:

- The context and conditions for the assessment.
- The tasks to be administered to the learner
- An outline of the evidence to be gathered from the learner and the criteria used to judge the quality of performance (including the assessment decision-making rules).
- The recording and reporting requirements.[1]

3.4.   Assessment tools provide the assessors with clear guidance on how to conduct the assessments, how the evidence will be collected and how a decision of successful completion is made. Assessment tools may relate to one or more-unit standards.

3.5.   Assessment tools may be a variety of documents that include:

- Instructions to assessors.
- Instructions to learners.
- Marking guides or rubrics, to inform assessor judgements.
- Mapping documents.
- Recording and reporting forms.

4.0   Planning external moderation (FHEC)

Scheduling

4.1.   The FHEC is responsible for the scheduling, frequency and timing of the external moderation consensus sessions.

4.2.   Moderation sessions of each NQ will normally occur at least twice per year, following the occurrence of assessment. The FHEC may adjust the frequency if required.

Sampling

4.3.   It is not necessary nor possible to externally moderate all unit standards and all assessor judgements. However, a sample should be able to identify any issues with assessment practices and judgements.

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[1] Gillis and Bateman 2009c, p. 57.

4.4. The FHEC in conjunction with external moderators will determine the unit standard sample. Decisions will be based on assessor experience and expertise as well as the data and information received by HEIs.

4.5. The sampling of unit standards will be based on the level of risk, focusing on (but not limited to):

- Learner enrolment size.
- Capacity and number of assessors.
- Safety (i.e. potential danger to the learner and broader community).
- Multiple sites (within an HEI).
- Changes in context (e.g. technological changes, revised unit standard, revised or new legislation).
- Mode of delivery (e.g. distance, online).
- Recognition of prior learning.
- Co-provider arrangements (e.g. twinning arrangements, franchise arrangements).
- Financial (e.g. expensive equipment required).

4.6. Sampling learner work is recommended and will consider:

- Adequate representation of the full range of performance
- Adequate representation of borderline cases at the satisfactory/not yet satisfactory threshold.
- An element of random selection.[2]

Reporting

4.7. The FHEC shall be responsible for reporting to HEIs moderation findings and recommendations.

4.8. The FHEC may take appropriate action such as:
- Providing capacity development activities.
- Monitoring HEIs to ensure that findings and recommendations are implemented across the HEI.
- Monitoring activities related to recognition and registration of HEIs and accreditation of qualifications.

Recording

4.9. The FHEC will retain all records of external moderation sessions. Moderation records will be used to inform future practice.

4.10. Records include:

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[2] Gillis and Bateman 2009c, p. 34.

- Records of the sampling strategy.
- Records of the coding used to maintain the confidentiality of samples.
- Instructions to assessors.
- Sampled items.
- Reporting form for each moderated sample.
- Meeting summary record form.
- Attendance form.[3]

4.11. Records shall not be retained beyond 2 years. Secure discard processes shall be deployed.

Complaints

4.12. As the external moderation process is managed by the FHEC, it is also responsible for dealing with any complaints that may arise.

4.13. Complainants shall utilise the FHEC complaints and appeals processes.

4.14. Details gained through the complaints process shall be used to inform improvements to the external moderation process.

Review the moderation system

4.15. The FHEC is responsible for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of moderation, e.g. cost effectiveness, continuous improvement, impact on quality assessments.

4.16. The reviews may be conducted on a periodic basis.

5.0 Organising external moderation sessions

Planning

5.1. The FHEC shall:

- Consult with the External Moderator on the proposed sample.
- Contact HEIs in relation to proposed dates and National Qualifications to be moderated.
- Request HEI data (for sampling purposes):
  - National Qualifications delivered.
  - The number of campuses.
  - Number and name of the learner (in each campus, in each qualification, in each unit).

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[3] Gillis and Bateman 2009c, p. 37-38.

- o   Recognition of prior learning.
- Request HEIs to also provide details of:
  - o   Number assessors (in each qualification), names (summary of their qualifications).
  - o   Proposed dates of unit standard assessments (completed).
  - o   Proposed dates of proposed internal moderation sessions.
- Request from HEIs sampled assessment tools and learner sample.
- Scrutinise the submitted sample to ensure that confidentiality is not compromised.
- De-identify the HEI and the assessor using the coding form to maintain accurate records.
- De-identify the learner sample using the coding form to maintain accurate records.
- Load copies of each assessment tool and the accompanying learner samples onto the web-based facility.

5.2.   The External Moderator shall:

- Assist the FHEC in the sampling strategy.
- Review all sample items in preparation to lead the meeting.

Conducting the meeting (Moderator)

5.3.   External moderation sessions will be conducted using a web-based facility.

5.4.   The External Moderator shall:
- Accurately record participation (attendance) at the moderation sessions.
- Ensure time constraints are met.
- Lead the panel in a discussion.
- Allow for the panel to complete their own self-assessment of the item (i.e. assessment tool and learner sample) using Template 3.
- Synthesise the findings of the panel including recommendations for improvement using Template 3.

Recording the meeting (Moderator)

5.5.   The External Moderator is responsible for:

- Providing to FHEC a report for each item moderated (i.e. assessment tool and learner sample).
- Providing to FHEC a summary report of attendees, findings and recommendations, suggest improvement or changes to moderation practices, assessment practice and to National Qualifications, or to interpretations of aspects of National Qualifications.

6.0   How to prepare for external moderation (for HEIs)

6.1.   HEIs and their assessors can prepare for external moderation by:

- Developing and documenting assessment tools using a quality checking process.
- Implementing processes for the retention of learner work.
- Implementing processes for the retention of assessor judgements.
- Implementing internal moderation processes.

6.2.   An HEI will have one point of contact to communicate with the FHEC and also coordinate preparation for external moderation.

6.3.   HEIs and assessors, once the unit standard sample and advice as to sampling learner work are known, are to:

- Ensure that the required documents and records are maintained and stored ready for external moderation.
- Copy of the relevant assessment tools.
- Copy the relevant learner sample and attach any other evidence.
- Provide to the FHEC in the time specified.

7.0   Related documentation
Relevant documents include:

- Specific forms including:
    - T.1   Assessment Cover Sheet (Assessor).
    - T.2   Coding Form (External Moderator).
    - T.3:   Item Record Form (External Moderator).
    - T.4   Summary Moderation Record and Report Form (External Moderator).

8.0   References

Gillis, S. and Bateman, A., 2009a, *A Code of professional practice for validation and moderation 2009,* National Quality Council, Canberra.

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Gillis, S. and Bateman, A., 2009c, *Implementation guide: validation and moderation 2009,* National Quality Council, Canberra.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority 2001, *Learning and assessment; A guide to assessment for the National Qualifications Framework,* New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Wellington.

9.0   APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR, FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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