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1.0 Overview

1.1 This procedure is specifically designed to meet the requirements of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) for the internal moderation of units at NQ and HN level. The standard procedure might also be compliant with the internal moderation standards specified by other awarding bodies with which the College is affiliated. However, where the stipulations of awarding bodies differ from the standard procedure, including SQA’s requirements for the internal verification of SVQ units, measures alternative or additional to the standard procedure are specified in appendices to this procedure.

1.2 Assessment materials, including candidate evidence, produced across the College portfolio will be sampled and internally moderated in accordance with awarding body guidelines in order to satisfy the College’s quality assurance obligations to specific awarding bodies (SQA, UAD, City & Guilds, etc.) and meet all relevant criteria for the delivery of the associated awards.

1.3 The purpose of this procedure is to:
   - provide a systematic and rigorous structure for the internal moderation of assessment on a curriculum area basis;
   - demonstrate use of and compliance with specified procedures;
   - underpin and support external moderation activities through corresponding internal measures and thereby safeguard student certification and the College’s quality contract with its external partners.
2.0 Responsibilities

2.1 Assessors

Assessors must be familiar with the documents which set out the requirements for the evidence which candidates must be able to generate. This information can be found in, for example, SQA National Course Arrangement documents and the evidence requirements section of unit specifications.

Where an instrument of assessment is locally devised, it must:

- be fit for purpose (e.g. where a practical skill requires to be demonstrated, a practical assessment should be chosen)
- allow candidates to produce enough evidence of the skills and knowledge specified in the qualification and ensure adequate coverage of all the outcomes
- generate evidence which can be measured against the standards specified in the qualification
- help all assessors of all candidates to make reliable assessment decisions where the same assessment task has been applied

Where choice of assessment instruments is offered to candidates, care must be taken to ensure that the options are of equal demand.

When devising or modifying assessment instruments, it is important to think about what will be accepted as evidence and how this will be marked or measured. For this reason, marking schemes must be devised at the same time as the assessment, ensuring that they complement each other.

Prior to use, all assessment instruments (and associated marking schemes) devised or modified by an assessor must be validated by an Internal Moderator, with the exception of National Assessment Bank (NAB), which are prior moderated.
Although minor amendments to NAB instruments do not require to be moderated by SQA, they must be validated by an Internal Moderator prior to use.

2.2 Internal Moderators

Delivery

It is the responsibility of Internal Moderators to ensure that:

- assessors receive appropriate advice and support;
- assessors have up to date awarding body documentation, records and guidelines;
- all instruments of assessment (and associated marking schemes), including minor amendments to NAB instruments, are validated prior to use;
- current unit specifications are used at all times;
- all units are delivered in accordance with the methods laid down in approved Unit Summary Forms, including agreed integrated delivery and assessment arrangements;
- students’ work is assessed using only previously validated assessment instruments;
- where more than one bank of assessment instruments has been devised, all must be similarly validated. Use of unauthorised assessment instruments may result in non-acceptance by External Moderators with serious consequences for student certification;
- appropriate remediation/reassessment procedures are followed;
- exemptions from assessment are correctly allowed and recorded. Exemptions should always be checked by Internal Moderators;
all relevant assessment material is available for inspection by External Moderators or any College monitoring group. The disposal of assessment material in accordance with External Moderation Procedures, should only be carried out under Internal Moderator authority.

Action and Documentation

It is the responsibility of Internal Moderators to ensure that:

- they hold centrally complete and up to date Master Folders of validated assessment materials for each active unit;
- sampling of student assessment work is carried out in compliance with the College Sampling Procedure, described on Page 13;
- Internal Moderation Groups (IMGs) for each moderation group (or, where applicable, element of a moderation group or cluster of moderation groups) are convened at least once per academic year. The remit of these IMGs is contained within these procedures;
- any holds placed on units by an External Moderator are dealt with in liaison with the Quality Manager, and that any advice or recommendations given during EM visits are implemented by the IMG;
- Internal Moderators are responsible for responses and action in respect of their moderation areas for outcomes of College Results Monitoring.

Planning

Internal Moderators are responsible for allocating all tasks relating to methods of delivery, updating and assessment to appropriate staff within the group of practitioners.
2.3 Moderation Group Leaders

The areas of responsibility of Moderation Group Leaders are outlined in the Internal Moderation Responsibility Index and it is the responsibility of Moderation Group Leaders to notify proposed changes to these allocations to the Quality Manager.

It is the responsibility of Moderation Group Leaders to ensure:

- that the College Internal Moderation system is implemented comprehensively and rigorously across all curriculum areas for which they are accountable;
- that all members of staff in their Moderation Group are fully aware of and compliant with Internal Moderation procedures;
- that all members of staff designated as Assessors or Internal Moderators are appropriately trained, qualified and have the necessary competence to fulfil their functions within the curriculum area(s) allocated to them;
- that a complete and up-to-date Moderation Group Folder, containing all documentation relating to internal and external moderation activities, is maintained for each moderation group for which the Moderation Group Leader is responsible;
- that a copy of the IMAUD form for each unit moderated is forwarded to the Quality Unit for logging.

2.4 Quality Manager

The Quality Manager is responsible for:

- ensuring that the Internal Moderation Responsibility Index is accurate and up-to-date;
- maintaining an accurate and up-to-date record of Internal Moderators and ensuring that details of all relevant qualifications are held centrally (with HR) and that the information is accessible when required;
monitoring and auditing internal moderation activity to ensure its comprehensive and rigorous implementation across the College;

- maintaining accurate and up-to-date records and documentation of all internal moderation activity;

- organising and delivering staff development activities in respect of internal moderation.

3.0 Internal Moderation Groups

3.1 Definition

An Internal Moderation Group is a working group consisting of an Internal Moderator and all of the practitioners involved in delivery of a specific subject area within the curriculum.

The Internal Moderation Group is the key vehicle for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the assessment process.

3.2 Communication with Group Members

Internal Moderators are responsible for communicating with all members of Internal Moderation Groups on a regular basis, in line with the requirements of the subject area. The methodology used may be selected to accommodate the needs of the group members, for example, meetings, e-mail, shared areas on the network, but communication should be on a regular basis and include all information relevant to the delivery of cognate activity, for example:

- Performance Indicators will always be discussed, i.e. SARU, and, where relevant, student feedback, i.e. CSR;

- amendment/update of unit specification by SQA;
• actions required by an External Moderator’s visit in respect of the moderation group concerned;
• consideration of the impact on curriculum delivery and assessment of changes in technology, etc.

3.3 Membership

a) Internal Moderation Group communications should be led by Internal Moderators.

b) Membership of the group must be open to all practitioners involved in the delivery and assessment of the relevant part of the curriculum. Internal Moderators are charged with ensuring that all practitioners have the opportunity to engage with the wider group and give/receive information as required. This is especially important in regard to staff in part-time roles, evening and those in other institutes.

c) Directors and Department Managers will ensure that every opportunity is given to practitioners to take part in such curricular discussions, in their own or in any other institute.

d) The Assistant Principal (Curriculum) / Director of Quality / Quality Manager may engage with any Internal Moderation Group activity and/or attend any Internal Moderation Group meeting.

3.4 Remit

The Internal Moderation Group will:

a) place the quality of the student experience at the centre of its consideration;

b) evaluate the quality and management of assessment;

c) ensure that assessment is subject to effective moderation;

d) analyse student achievement in relation to SARU and CSR.
3.5 Required Activity

The Internal Moderator is responsible for ensuring that the following activities are conducted for each moderation group (s)he is responsible for:

a) approval of new assessment instruments;

b) approval of amendments to existing assessment instruments;

c) presentation and discussion of SARU data;

d) monitoring of results;

e) action in response to external moderators’ reports;

f) moderation of student assessment material.

3.6 Action/Record

a) The Internal Moderator is responsible for ensuring that all tasks agreed by Internal Moderation Groups are allocated to staff, completed and implemented and that a record is maintained of such action.

b) Minutes (where appropriate), including details of action, are to be produced by Internal Moderators and retained for audit purposes. In all cases, minutes will be copied to the Quality Manager.

4.0 Master Folders

A Master Folder should contain the key documents required for the delivery and assessment of any subject.

Master folders will be generated, maintained and centrally held by Internal Moderators. Delivery staff may have their own working copies of these folders if required, but should ensure that this is kept up-to-date.
All master folders will contain the following:

- master folder contents checklist [IMMFC]
- current unit specification
- unit summary form [IMUSF]
- instruments of assessment
- re-assessment instruments
- marking scheme [IMMKS]
- schedule of work [IMSOW]
- assessment schedule [IMASS]
- exemption document [IMEXD]

Once development of a new unit has been completed, the assessor forwards a complete copy of the above documentation to the appropriate Internal Moderator for validation of the new materials prior to their use with learners. Following successful moderation of the instruments of assessment and associated materials, the Internal Moderator will stamp the Master Folder copy of these with an ‘IA Approved For Use’ stamp, sign and date them.

In the case of amendments/updates to an existing unit, the assessor forwards a copy of the amended documentation to the appropriate Internal Moderator for validation of the revised materials prior to their use with learners. Following successful moderation of the instruments of assessment and associated materials, the Internal Moderator will stamp the Master Folder copy of these with an ‘IA Approved For Use’ stamp, sign and date them.

The Internal Moderator generates a new Master Folder or updates the contents of an existing Master Folder to ensure that it remains current and complete.

Once the moderation checks have been satisfactorily completed, the Internal Moderator signs off the Master Folder Contents Checklist [IMMFC] and completes Stage 1 of the Record of Internal Moderation [IMAUD] form.
5.0  Moderation Group Folders

A Moderation Group Folder should contain the key documents required for the moderation of an SQA unit. All moderation group folders will contain the following:

- a list of approved subjects for the specific moderation group
- the moderation schedule
- evidence of internal moderation activity
- copies of record of internal moderation forms [IMAUD]
- copies of external moderation reports

Creation and maintenance of Moderation Group Folders is the responsibility of Moderation Group Leaders.

6.0  Sampling Procedure

The College’s internal moderation sampling procedures are based on the SQA procedure for candidate sampling as detailed in the publication “Guide to Assessment and Quality Assurance for Colleges of Further Education”, August 2003.

All units being delivered by the College will be sampled at least once over a 3-year period, as part of a rolling programme. However, ‘high risk’ units will be targeted more frequently. ‘High risk’ units might include:

- units being delivered in the College for the first time;
- units being delivered by a particular member of staff for the first time;
- units with which there have been difficulties in the past.

Sampling will take place within six weeks of completion of a unit by a group of students.

For each unit being moderated, a sample group of 12 candidates’ evidence should be requested from across the
College provision. Where the number of students entered for a unit is less than 12, the candidate evidence for the whole group should be requested. From this sample, the candidate evidence of a random selection of 6 students should be reviewed. Only where there are issues which require further investigation will it be necessary to review the work of the remaining candidates from the original sample.

The moderation sample will include a range of outcomes for the unit, i.e. Pass, Fail and Merit (where applicable).

Student work which has been sampled will show evidence of this having happened by being initialled and dated by the moderator.

All internal moderation decisions relating to sampled work will be recorded using the relevant documentation as detailed in the internal moderation procedure.

Student work will be retained for at least three weeks after the completion date of a unit. If no notification of external moderation has been received from SQA by this time, student work may be safely disposed of. For units with completion dates later than March, student work must be retained until after SQA has selected units for retrospective moderation.

7.0 Internal Moderation Procedure

7.1 The Internal Moderation Cycle runs concurrently with the academic year, i.e. begins in August, ends in July.

7.2 At the beginning of each internal moderation cycle, the Quality Manager will check that the Internal Moderation Responsibility Index is accurate and up-to-date, then circulate it to Moderation Group Leaders.

7.3 At the beginning of each internal moderation cycle, Moderation Group Leaders will compile an Internal
Moderation Schedule, then circulate it to Internal Moderators with a copy to the Quality Manager.

7.4 Prior to delivery, the Internal Moderator will communicate with all members of the group facilitate the review and approve the contents of newly developed or revised/modified Master Folders. The Internal Moderator will complete Part 1 of the Record of Internal Moderation [IMAUD1]. The Internal Moderator will produce a record of the meeting (where required), and circulate them to all members of the Group with copies to the Moderation Group Leader and the Quality Manager.

7.5 Post-delivery, the Internal Moderator will communicate with the Internal Moderation Group to analyse PI data, monitor results, review external moderators’ reports and sample candidate evidence. The Internal Moderator will complete Part 2 of the Record of Internal Moderation [IMAUD1] and forward copies to the Moderation Group Leader and the Quality Manager. The Internal Moderator will produce a record of the meeting (where required), then circulate them to all members of the Group with copies to the Moderation Group Leader and the Quality Manager.

7.6 On completion of the annual Internal Moderation Cycle, the Moderation Group Leader will produce a Moderation Group Summary Report, with copies to the relevant Internal Moderator(s) and the Quality Manager.

7.7 The Moderation Group Leader is responsible maintaining accurate and complete records of all moderation activity through the Moderation Group Folder.
At the beginning of each academic year, the Quality Manager will check that the Internal Moderation Responsibility Index is accurate and up-to-date, then circulate to Moderation Group Leaders.

At the beginning of each academic year, **Moderation Group Leaders** will compile an Internal Moderation Schedule, then circulate to Internal Moderators with a copy to the Quality Manager.

Prior to delivery, the **Internal Moderator** will communicate with the Internal Moderation Group to review and approve the contents of newly developed or revised/modified Master Folders. The Internal Moderator will stamp new/revised instruments of assessment as approved for use, complete Part 1 of the Record of Internal Moderation [IMAUD1] and produce minutes (where required) of the group meeting, copied to Group members, the Moderation Group Leader and the Quality Manager.

Post-delivery, the **Internal Moderator** will convene a meeting of the Internal Moderation Group to analyse PI data, monitor results, sample candidate evidence and review External Moderators’ reports. The Internal Moderator will complete Part 2 of the Record of Internal Moderation [IMAUD1] and produce minutes of the group meeting, copied to Group members, the Moderation Group Leader and the Quality Manager.

On completion of the Internal Moderation Cycle, the **Moderation Group Leader** will produce a Summary Report for each moderation group for which he/she is responsible, copied to Internal Moderators and the Quality Manager.