

**TAKORADI TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY**



**ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION  
POLICY**

**2021**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Moderation is an essential part of academic quality assurance processes that facilitate consistency and reliability in the assessment of students' learning and performances. Typically, moderation takes the form of a review of any or all the courses. This includes course outline, assessment (assignment, project work, mini project), examination papers, marking schemes and examination marked scripts.

Moderation helps the University to ensure that examination papers are scrutinised to eliminate or reduce errors to the barest minimum. Since students are trained to perform on the job, their impact on the reputation of the University is held in high esteem. In this wise, it is the University's target to ensure that the assessment outcomes are always fair, valid and reliable. This can only be achieved when assessment criteria have been applied consistently based on the policy of the University, and that any differences in academic judgement between individual assessors (markers) can be acknowledged. To achieve this, assessment criteria in line with the policy of the University should be consistently applied, acknowledging any differences in academic judgement among individual assessors.

The following moderation principles comply with the policy for Higher Education Learning, Guidance and Assessment. The outcome of any stage of the scores' moderation process will be an agreed set of scores to

proceed to the next stage of moderation or to the relevant Assessment Board.

## **2.0 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

Takoradi Technical University is committed to striving for the highest level of academic standards. The processes of moderation outlined in this policy are part of the broader process for achieving academic excellence and ensuring that standards of students' learning and assessment of learning outcomes are consistent with the level set out by Ghana's Ministry of Education and other regulatory bodies regarding review and moderation of course outlines, questions and marking schemes. These course outlines, assessments, marking and grading lead to consistency and help to ensure that the criteria remain aligned to courses of study and their learning outcomes. The University employs a system-based approach to moderating to help pre-empt problems and facilitate continuous improvement in all aspects of course design and delivery. This also helps promote fair, consistent and transparent practices and staff policy compliance aimed at achieving students' understanding of expected curricula at all levels of their studies and progress. The system-based approach to moderating also guides lecturers to compare their own judgments to either confirm to or adjust curricula. With this, the University achieves a better understanding of the quality of their students.

### **3.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

This policy applies to all academic staff, including full-time, part-time and any other staff who may be assigned to perform such functions.

### **4.0 Moderation**

This is a key element of the summative assessment process; it is undertaken to ensure that the assessment process conducted by academic staff in terms of outcome is fair, reliable and transparent and provides assurance that marking is of an appropriate standard and assessment criteria have been applied consistently. Moderation therefore:

- Is concerned particularly with reliability. This means that, as far as possible, assessors acting independently of each other but using the same assessment criteria would reach the same judgement on a piece of work.
- Ensures that the assessment process has been carried out with rigour, probity and fairness.
- Is complemented by processes which assure validity, including the design, setting and approval of the assessment tasks (to measure achievement of courses and programme learning outcomes).
- Provides an opportunity to engage with the quality of student feedback which will help monitor and inform future assessments and feedback handling.

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4.1 Pre-moderation is defined as the review, prior to module delivery, of all instruments of assessment, internally and externally.

4.2 Post-moderation is defined as the internal moderation of assessed work on all taught diploma, Higher National Diploma (HND), undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. It also refers to the external moderation of assessed works at all levels.

### **5.0 The Moderation Process in brief**

The moderation process, as adopted by TTU, is:

- 1) Once initial scoring has been undertaken, a sample of all assessed work (courses taught at the diploma, HND, undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate levels, except dissertation/projects) will be subjected to Second/Double scoring.
- 2) All dissertation/projects will be Double Blind marked on a comment/mark-concealed basis.
- 3) All assessed work samples will be made available for external moderators' scrutiny.
- 4) A transparent moderation policy will be evidenced using the University's Moderation Policy, which will contribute to the programme, faculty/school and University monitoring and the external moderators' reports. This will show the fairness, rigour and equity in the assessment process to stakeholders.

- 5) It must include the process of moderation within the Programme/Modulation policy.
- 6) Alternative assessment arrangement shall be required because of provisions under the examination policy of TTU.
- 7) Challenges to this moderation process are acknowledged, for instance, large cohorts and teams of assessors, assessment types such as practice placement assessment may require alternative approaches to moderation. These situations are addressed in the principles below.

## **6.0 SECTION ONE: PRE-MODERATION**

### **Principles informing confirmation of work set for assessment purposes**

6.1 Prior to course delivery, all instruments of assessment (assignments, examination papers, marking schemes for all examinations) must be internally reviewed by moderators in the event that the programme is externally awarded. External examiners must be fully consulted on assignments, examination papers and marking schemes for all examination questions. This includes resit activities before the issuance of such instruments to students.

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The moderation principles should confirm the following:

- 6.1 Assessment tasks align with the learning outcomes of the topics or course.
- 6.2 Assessment workload is appropriate to the credit weight of the course being assessed, particularly if there are multiple assessment components within the module.
- 6.3 Assignment briefs/examination papers are checked to ensure questions are free of typographical/grammatical errors.
- 6.4 Multiple-choice questions and online examinations have been pre-tested and approved.
- 6.5 Assessment task instructions are unambiguous, straight forward and clear with particular attention paid to correct guidance to students.
- 6.6 The duration for the examinations is clearly communicated (that is, from the start to the finish, the limits and the penalties for students.)
- 6.7 It provides students with course descriptions and marking schemes/criteria in assessment briefs at the commencement of the course and also detailed within course outlines.
- 6.8 Assessment designs have minimised opportunities for plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct.
- 6.9 Feedback process and timeframe for return of course works are clearly stated within programme/course outlines.
- 6.10 Assessment tasks are internally reviewed against the above principles prior to being sent to external

moderators. External moderators have a minimum of ten working days to consider assessment tasks and provide comments.

## **7.0 STANDARDISATION OF QUESTIONS FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES**

### **Introduction**

In order to obtain fair and standardised examination questions, it is proposed that lecturers of all academic programmes adhere strictly to the following guidelines for setting end-of-semester examination questions:

1. Questions should, as far as possible, cover all topics in the approved syllabus.
2. Detail marking schemes should be provided – those details will aid reviewers and moderators to know exactly what each examiner expects from students.
3. All questions must be:
  - a. Of reasonable length.
  - b. Unambiguous.
  - c. Answerable within time limit.
4. All questions should be short answer questions or essay type (except practical work).
5. The number of questions set for theory paper should be between four (4) and six (6) questions (except practical work) and the number of objective questions set should be between forty (40) and sixty (60) questions.

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6. Students will be entitled to answer between 3 and 5 out of the number of questions set for the theory paper and answer all question for the objective paper.
7. The time allotted to a paper (except practical work) should be between 2 to 3 hours.
8. Each question should carry between 20 and 25 marks.
9. The paper should be marked out of 100 and converted to 60% thereafter.

## **8.0 Marking**

We define marking as a review of students' work against the aim of the first marker (the person designated to apply a mark to a piece of assessment). Where a second or double marking takes place, the aim is to seek alignment with the original mark. Additional marking may be required where there is significant difference between the marks awarded to a piece of assessment following a second or double marking that cannot be resolved without the opinion of a third marker.

8.1 Second/Double Marking: It refers to the review of an assessment by a second marker with knowledge or sight of the first marker's comments.

8.2 Double-Blind Marking: It refers to the review of an assessment by a second marker with no knowledge or

sight of the first marker's comments e.g. dissertations/ projects.

8.3 Third/Additional Marking: Marking of an assessment by a third (or subsequent) marker following second/double or double-blind marking, where there is significant difference between the marks awarded that cannot be resolved without the opinion of another marker.

8.4 Anonymous Marking: Concealing the identity of the student who submitted the assessment from the staff member marking their work until a mark is agreed by the marker. The identity of the student is only revealed once the mark has been agreed on and feedback confirmed.

## **SECTION TWO: POST-MODERATION**

### **Vetting of Marked Scripts**

#### **9.0 Internal Moderation**

All assessed works on courses taught at Diploma, HND, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (excluding dissertation/projects) will be internally moderated as detailed below:

- 9.1 A sample of all assessed works will be Second/Double Marked, where the internal moderator is informed of the first assessor's marks and determines whether the marks awarded appropriately reflect the standard of work and that the marking criteria have been consistently applied. The Course/Module Leader must arrange for a sample of assessments to be selected for internal moderation. Normally 10% of work will be moderated. Sampling should be conducted for cohorts of 11 or more students. In the cases of smaller cohorts, it may be appropriate to moderate all pieces of work, rather than a sample.
- 9.2 The basis of selection of the sample will be transparent to the moderators. It will provide a full study cohort list with the sample. Normally the sample will be agreed between the assessor and the moderator.

- 9.3 9.3 The sample will normally include marked scripts from each of the classification bands, including borderlines (5% above pass mark) and fails.
- 9.4 Where a team of assessors undertake assessment, it must include marked assessments from all first assessors in the standard sample. Consideration will need to be given to large cohorts with multiple assessors, as to the number of scripts from each assessor that will contribute to the sample.
- 9.5 For large cohorts, where there is more than one assessor, it is recommended that a sample of work will be internally moderated before all marking is completed. This will assure the standard and consistency of marking and pre-empt delays in the assessment process, which might occur if extensive remarking were to be required.
- 9.6 Where a course is delivered by more than one teaching team in more than one location, or in more than one mode of delivery, a separate sample should be moderated for each delivery, and these cross-moderated.
- 9.7 Where the assessor and the moderator cannot produce an agreeable mark, it shall be the responsibility of the Moderation Leader to organise further assessment of the script by a third appropriately experienced assessor in order that a mark can be determined. In such cases, the third assessor will determine the ultimate mark to be awarded.

9.8 All individuals involved with marking or moderating scripts and determining a mark will sign the assessment script.

## **10.0 External Moderation**

All assessed works on courses taught at Diploma, HND, undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate programmes (excluding dissertations/projects) may be externally moderated as detailed below:

- 10.1 The Moderation Leader must arrange for the same internally moderated sample of work to be externally moderated by an external moderator. An External moderator may ask to see additional work, or even the full course set, if he/she deems it necessary for effective moderation.
- 10.2 The outcomes of the external moderation process will be:
  - a. The external moderator(s) confirms the course marks provided by the internal moderator(s).
  - b. The external moderator(s) recommends that a set of marks be scaled, either upward or downwards, or the external moderator recommends the correction of marks that have been calculated incorrectly, where both internal and external moderators agree.
  - c. The external moderator(s) confirms consistent and acceptable standards in written feedback provided to students.

- d. The External moderator(s) confirms the score of the students using the evidence process of the internal moderator(s).
- 10.3 It will not be appropriate for an external moderator to recommend adjustments to individual marks awarded in a sample of work.

### **11.0 Moderation of dissertations, theses/project works**

For dissertations, theses/project works, the principles outlined below will be followed:

- 11.1 All written elements associated with dissertations, theses/project works will be Double -Blind marked on the basis of a mark/comment concealed.
- 11.2 Where the two assessors cannot produce an agreeable mark, it shall be the responsibility of the Dissertation, thesis/Project Coordinator to organise further assessment of the written work by a third appropriately experienced assessor in order that a mark can be determined. In such cases, the third assessor will determine the ultimate mark to be awarded.
- 11.3 The Moderation Leader will carefully choose an assessor to limit the number of dissertations, theses/project works which any one pair of staff can co-mark.
- 11.4 To ensure transparency of the process, the first and second assessors will formally record their

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independent assessments before their meeting to negotiate an agreement. The basis of the agreement reached will be formally noted and made available to the external moderator.

- 11.5 External moderators are not asked to examine more than a standard sample of dissertations, theses/project works, but they will be asked to confirm in the external moderator's report that the process of internal moderation was clearly evidenced.

## **12.0 Further General Moderation Principles**

- 12.1 It should be noted that, as with internal moderation, the purpose of external moderation is not to recommend adjustments to individual marks awarded in a sample of work, but to ensure overall standards and consistency.
- 12.2 There will be a transparent evidence/audit trail of the processes of internal and external moderation which will be recorded using the standardised University Moderation Policy. This will include a clear articulation justifying mark adjustments.
- 12.3 Besides confirming the standard and consistency of marking, it is expected that internal and external moderators will comment on the quality of feedback provided by the first assessor.

- 12.4 Students should be provided with a single mark and a set of feedback comments on their assessed work, as agreed by the assessors. The feedback given on their performances in the assignment must be consistent with the final assigned mark.
- 12.5 Particular arrangements should be considered for moderation of work that is first marked by those who may be less familiar with the assessment process. These arrangements might include Double Blind rather than Second/Double Marking or moderation of a larger sample.
- 12.6 It is expected that a schedule (mapping the moderation milestones) will be agreed upon. This will include the process by which students' work will be made available to external moderators, considering whether scripts will be delivered by post/electronically or made available to the University personally when asked to do so prior to the Departments, Faculty and University Academic Board meetings.
- 12.7 Moderated work should normally be available for external moderators' scrutiny. The timeline should be a minimum of 10 working days before the Academic Board meeting.
- 12.8 Oversight of the moderation process will be achieved through:

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- a. The annual monitoring of completed external moderators' reports.
- b. Departmental, Faculty and School monitoring of completed University Moderation policy, as part of Annual Programme Monitoring.

12.9.1 Whilst multiple choice papers and online examinations cannot be moderated in the same way as other forms of assessments, certain quality assurance processes will be employed including:

- a) All multiple-choice questions/online examinations will have been pre-tested before students sit for the assessment/examination.
- b) All multiple-choice papers/online examinations will have to be checked for accuracy and clarity of instructions before students sit for the assessment/examination.
- c) The process for awarding marks/calculating the ultimate mark will have to be checked before students sit for the assessment/examination.

12.10 Consideration should be given to internal and external moderation of practical or oral assessments. Moderation processes may need to be adapted to accommodate these alternative approaches to assessment, e.g., through video (conferencing) and

recording, provision of students' slides/handouts in the presence of external moderators.

12.11 Where variations from standard University practice are required (teaching, learning and quality assurance), these should be subject to formal approval by the Faculties/School's Deans, following consultation with external moderators.